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THE RELIGION OF JESUS.

COMPARED WITH

The Christianity of To-Day.

FREDERICK A. BINNEY.



The Religion of Jesus.

THE RELIGION OF JESUS

COMPARED WITH

The Christianity of To-Day.

BY

FRED^K A. BINNEY.



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P R E F A C E.

THE following work is an attempt to prove a conclusion, which has long since occurred to the author, and which is not in itself at all novel—namely, that the Religion which Jesus taught is not the Christianity of to-day. Having the usual familiarity with the doctrines of modern orthodox theology, I, for a long time, never thought of comparing them with the texts on which they are based. After due consideration, it occurred to me, however, that a fair argument against the authenticity of modern dogma might be based upon many extracts from Christ's own utterances, without regard to the weapons of human reason which have been urged against it so ably by other and more competent writers than myself, in scores of bulky volumes. The plan here adopted has been to analyse the contents of the original record itself, and by judicious classification to show how much authority there is in favour of the view of Christianity expounded in the following pages, and how much—or, rather, how little—there is in favour of the Christianity taught in Churches. The result of that comparison the reader will find in the following pages; and I think the conviction it will make upon his mind will be, that there is marvellously little foundation for the *doctrines* which our Churches point to as the vital elements of Christian

teaching, and an overwhelming amount of testimony in favour of the proposition, that Christianity relates to our *deeds* and *motives* much more than it has to do with our *beliefs* and our *professions*.

I may best summarise the scope of the following work by saying, that its object is to undermine the importance which all Christian Churches attach to *doctrine*—as a means of salvation—and to bring into prominence the value of Christ's moral teachings, which, according to his own showing, alone comprise the one thing needful. In short, I have endeavoured to show that Modern Christianity—in dwelling so prominently on the value of the doctrine of Christ's Divinity and the Atonement—virtually preaches *Salvation through the Birth and DEATH OF CHRIST*; whereas the New Testament most emphatically teaches *Salvation only through the LIFE OF CHRIST*.

Although I endeavoured as much as possible to prove my case from the letter of Scripture itself, rather than from pure reason, I soon found that many startling and incredible statements *are* unquestionably advanced in the Gospels which, if accepted literally, must either neutralise the rest, or else require to be explained away. Since, therefore, our divines themselves do not scruple to explain away anything that tells against their own conclusions, I considered I should be equally justified in giving reasons why *I* could not accept these puzzling texts as infallible truth. For this purpose it became necessary to establish the proposition, that the Scriptures are not to be taken as literally and infallibly true; and that, therefore, texts which our reason rejects as antichristian, or incomprehensible, may safely be so rejected. To this end I have

availed myself, in the Introduction, of the labours of other writers much more competent to establish these propositions than myself.

Whether or not the reader accepts the conclusions of these writers, I venture to think that—even taking every text as of equal value—there is abundant proof that modern orthodox theology is not the true Christianity; and that it is needful we should look once more to the words of Christ rather than quarrel amongst ourselves, as many are doing, about points of doctrine which are of no practical importance.

I may perhaps anticipate, by a little explanation, one objection which critics will be sure to make to the following exposition of the Religion of Jesus. It will be said, that many passages of Scripture, which I have interpreted in their literal and grammatical sense, appreciable by all ordinary English readers, are not so interpreted by the Church. I shall be referred to the original Greek (which I do not profess to understand, or to have referred to), and to countless expositions of able divines who have, by wonderful hair-splitting and word-distorting processes, succeeded in proving to the satisfaction of their admiring followers, if not to the world at large, that all Scriptural discrepancies can be reconciled and made clear and free from doubt or ambiguity. I shall be told, that if I had consulted the original Greek or Hebrew, I should have learnt that the passages in question, which, as expressed in plain English, mean one thing; when read in the light of these authorities, really mean something quite different! In answer to these objections, I wish to explain beforehand that—with all deference to the able divines who, I

shall be told, have anticipated and explained everything, years, perhaps, before the present writer was born—I claim the right, as an ordinary lay reader of the Bible, to interpret that Book as I find it, namely, as it is published and sold and used throughout the length and breadth of the land. The Book which is given to the world, and distributed over the whole earth with such zeal, by countless Christian missionaries, is a plain English version, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It contains neither notes nor comments. It is the Bible, pure and simple, that is thrust into the hands of the unlettered Englishman, or the ignorant convert from Paganism ; and it is this Book that he is told to read diligently and often. For him the Greek original and the expositions of divines have no existence. I have endeavoured, therefore, to place myself in the position of such a reader, and to judge of the Book on its merits, regardless of the learned explanations that may (for aught I know) be hidden away by scores upon the neglected shelves of ecclesiastical libraries. If the Bible cannot be thus fairly treated, then I contend that the fault lies with those who thus indiscriminately distribute a Book that can only be read by the aid of a key which they do not furnish to the reader, and which not one in a thousand ever has the chance of consulting.

Although I doubt not there are many able and conscientious critics of the Bible in the Church, who, like Colenso and Voysey, love truth more than the favour of their fellow-men, and whose expositions of the Scriptures are sincere and impartial ; yet, it cannot be denied, that every divine who criticises the New Testament, does so with a natural

bias in favour of one particular interpretation of its meaning. He is in the position of a paid advocate. He *cannot* come to any other conclusion than one, and this fact it is impossible to ignore, in reading his work. However disinterested and sincere he may be, it is impossible not to feel that he is simply seeking to prove a foregone conclusion. He is tied down hand and foot by the Articles of his Church, and, so long as he remains in it, he can but hold the opinions there expressed. For these reasons I have preferred to place myself in the position of an unlearned reader, who tries to find out the *Religion of Jesus* from the Book before him, uninfluenced by the advocates for the special interpretation which is dear to either one sect of Christians or another.

At the time that the following pages were written, I was, comparatively speaking, unacquainted with what had been done in the same direction by other writers. In this age of religious activity, when so many works for and against Christianity and the Bible are constantly being issued from the press, it seemed hardly likely that an inexperienced Bible scholar could produce anything original upon modern Christianity. Its merits and defects have been so completely discussed and dissected by learned scholars and divines, after life-long labours upon the subject, that for a layman—whose acquaintance with the Bible and Christianity is little more than that which every churchgoer unconsciously imbibes—to set up as a critic of orthodox theology, and humbly point out where the world is going wrong, and in what modern Christianity is mistaken, will doubtless be considered a gross piece of presumption. I shall be reminded, doubtless of certain

well-known lines concerning "fools who rush in where angels fear to tread;" but, as Professor Max Müller has said, "If I read history rightly, the victory of reason over unreason, and the whole progress of our race, has generally been accomplished and achieved by such poor fools as ourselves rushing in where angels fear to tread, till at length the track became beaten, and even angels are no longer afraid."

Be this as it may, I venture to think it the duty of every man who has anything to say, which he has good reason to believe will benefit the world, to make it known, and leave the public to judge for themselves of its merits, and especially if—as I believe to be the case here—no writer has exactly gone over the same ground in the same manner.

Moreover, most men learn by experience that if they venture to put their own interpretation upon the Religion of Jesus, and do not accept the doctrines that are taught in Churches, they very soon come to be regarded with suspicion, not to say uncharitableness, by their neighbours. The latter, without knowing what it is such persons believe, do not hesitate at once to stigmatise them as atheists or infidels, and to treat them accordingly. Having learnt a little of this human weakness from experience, there is another motive in making public the following pages, namely, to aid in widening the views, and enlarging the charity of such modern followers of Christ. Should the following pages succeed in contributing to that end, it will, at least, be some satisfaction to the author.

F. A. B.

24 *St. Ann's Square, Manchester,*
March, 1877.

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APPENDIX.

THE RELIGION OF JESUS

COMPARED WITH

THE CHRISTIANITY OF TO-DAY.

Introduction.

IN the following pages I have ventured to undertake the task of carefully extracting from the New Testament what appeared to me to be the Christianity of Jesus, and then endeavouring impartially to contrast that teaching with the Christianity of to-day. Having accomplished this task, I discovered that many weighty questions would arise upon the extracts I proposed to present to the reader which I could not pretend to deal with, and which I knew that other writers had already disposed of far more satisfactorily than it would be possible for an unlearned Bible student like myself to do. For example : it was necessary that the reader and I should have some common data to build our conclusions upon before he could accept my ideas upon New Testament Christianity. I found that some persons disbelieved in the inspiration of the Scriptures ; others denied all evidence of the existence of a God ; others objected to the Divine authority of Christ ; whilst many believed some portions of Scripture to be authoritative, and others not. To settle these questions was no part of my scheme, but I concluded that it would be advisable at least to form certain opinions on these questions, and approach the subject with the expression of some convictions upon the veracity of the documents I intended to criticise.

In commencing the following examination of the New Testament I have consequently assumed certain propositions as established—namely, that there is an overruling Providence, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe; that the laws of nature are the laws of God; that the Bible contains a revelation of God's moral laws, *but is not necessarily the only revelation*; that the Bible is a collection of historical documents written in a remote age by fallible men, and *is not, therefore, to be taken as infallibly and literally accurate and free from error*; that the original teachings of Christ were a revelation of Divine truths, but being *reported by fallible human beings* it does not follow that the records we have are to be taken as absolutely true, word for word, and therefore the truth must be gathered from a correct understanding of the spirit of the whole rather than the letter of isolated texts.

Upon these data I have endeavoured impartially to extract all the passages from the New Testament which seem to have an express bearing upon THE RELIGION OF JESUS. I approached the subject with no other prejudices than those implied in the foregoing assumptions, and a conviction that the Christianity of to-day could not possibly be the Christianity of Christ. It seemed to me impossible that Christ could have propounded doctrines as truths which do not present themselves as such to the minds of earnest seekers after truth. An infallible revelation of Divine truth, it seemed to me, must be so clear that men could not possibly be always differing about it; and therefore I concluded that the doctrines of orthodox Christianity could not be Divine truth, since no two Christian sects agree in their interpretation of God's Word.

The result of my perusal of the New Testament, with this object in view and with these opinions before me, is presented in the following pages. I confess that many of the conclusions which I found myself obliged to come to were unexpected by myself, and were such as I had not

been prepared for at the time I commenced the task. Such as they are, I here present them to the reader in the hope that they may in time assist in the elimination of error from the doctrines of orthodox Christianity, and the spread of that true Christianity which I have endeavoured in the following pages to explain.

Feeling that possibly other and abler writers had written upon modern Christianity in the same strain and to the same effect, I deemed it advisable to make myself acquainted with the opinions of a few of the leading writers on the same subject, and notably with such works as Tischendorff's "New Testament," Greg's "Creed of Christendom," Arnold's "Literature and Dogma," &c.

First, in relation to Tischendorff's work, all readers of the Bible are *supposed* to be acquainted with its history, but unfortunately it is too true that the majority of modern Christians know little or nothing about it. They have a vague idea that it is the Word of God, but whether the Almighty wrote it Himself or dictated it to others they have probably never paused to consider.

Those who have made the Bible a critical study are, of course, sufficiently acquainted with its origin to need no such explanation as is offered by Tischendorff's little book—"When were our Gospels Written?"—but as the following pages are not intended for scholars but for the average English reader, I do not think any apology is necessary for presenting a short summary of Tischendorff's researches in the history of the Book we are about to criticise.

Dr. Tischendorff, the celebrated German scholar, has published* the result of his researches into the origin of the four Gospels in a popular form, and all who feel interested in the Christianity of the New Testament would do well to read this admirable little work. In it he gives a

* "When were our Gospels Written? An Argument by Constantine Tischendorff, with a Narrative of the Discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript." London: The Religious Tract Society, 164 Piccadilly. 1870.

graphic narration of his remarkable discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript, after a search of twenty years, and concludes with a scholarly argument in favour of the authenticity of St. John's Gospel. The general result of his conclusions is there stated to be, "*that by the end of the first century our four Gospels were in use in the Church.*" He gives conclusive proof, by extracts from ancient writers, that the text of the Gospels was in general use about the middle of the second century, and observes that we may well suppose that "before this text came into use it had a history of its own. I mean that the text passed from one hand to another, and was copied again and again, and so must have suffered from all these revisions. I can only here assert this as the result of my long experience in dealing with manuscripts, without going into details to prove that it was so. But I must here make the assertion as one of the most important results of my critical labours. If no one before me has been able to establish this point in the same way, this is owing to my fortunate discovery of the Sinaitic copy."

The author sets out his proofs for these conclusions in the work in question in a clear and interesting manner, which the reader can judge of for himself, as it is beyond the scope of this work to go into the question of the authenticity of the Gospels.

It will suffice if we glance at one or two of the proofs which this able scholar advances for the statement which he makes on page 51, that "it is a well established fact that already between A.D. 150 and 200, not only were the Gospels translated into Latin and Syriac, but also that their number was defined to be four only, neither more nor less; and this remarkable fact is well calculated to throw light on the question of their true age and origin."

Irenæus, says Tischendorff, who died in the second year of the third century, had in his youth sat at the feet of the aged Polycarp, and Polycarp, in his turn, had been a dis-

iple of the Evangelist St. John, and had conversed with other eye-witnesses of the Gospel narratives. Irenæus, in speaking of his own personal recollections, gives us Polycarp's own account of that which he had heard from the lips of St. John and other disciples of our Lord, and expressly adds that all these words agree with Scripture. But let us hear his own words as contained in a letter to Florinus :—"When I was yet a child, I saw thee at Smyrna, in Asia Minor, at Polycarp's house, where thou wert distinguished at Court, and obtained the regard of the bishop. I can more distinctly recollect things which happened then than others more recent ; for events which happened in infancy seem to grow with the mind and to become part of ourselves, so that I can recall the very place where Polycarp used to sit and teach, his manner of speech, his mode of life, his appearance, the style of his address to the people, his frequent references to St. John and to others who had seen our Lord, how he used to repeat from memory their discourses which he had heard from them concerning our Lord, his miracles and mode of teaching, and how, being instructed himself by those who were eye-witnesses to the Word, there was in all that he said a strict agreement with the Scriptures." This, says Dr. Tischendorff, is the account which Irenæus himself gives of his connection with Polycarp, and of the truths which he had learned from him. "Who will now venture to question whether this Father had ever heard a word from Polycarp about the Gospel of St. John? The time when Irenæus, then a young man, was known to Polycarp, who died a martyr at Smyrna about A.D. 175, could not have been later than A.D. 150; yet they would have us believe that Irenæus had not then heard a word from his master, Polycarp, about the Gospel of St. John, when he so often recalls the discourses of this Apostle! Any testimony of Polycarp in favour of the Gospel refers us back to the Evangelist himself; for Polycarp, in speaking to Irenæus

of this Gospel as a work of his master St. John, must have learned from the lips of the Apostle himself whether he was its author or not."

Whether or not the Gospel we call after St. John was written by him is hardly a subject which comes within my province to discuss. The opinions of Tischendorff are not those of other scholars, and the utmost that his researches seem to prove is, that *the four Gospels we now have date back to very near the time of Christ*. Who wrote them is quite another question, and which must be settled upon internal evidence of their contents. Mr. Greg has contributed to this in his book to be presently noticed.

In his Introduction to the New Testament,* Tischendorff tells us that "for thirty years he occupied himself in searching not only the libraries of Europe, but the obscurest convents of the East, both in Africa and Asia, for the most ancient manuscripts of the Bible; and did all in his power to collect the most important of such documents, to arrange them, and to publish them, for the benefit both of the present age and of posterity, so as to settle the original text of the sacred writers on the basis of the most careful investigation."

Tischendorff gives a short account of the three ancient MSS. of the New Testament, namely, the *Vatican Codex*, the *Alexandrian Codex*, and the *Sinaitic Codex*. The latter he himself was the discoverer of, in 1844, at the Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai. The date of the first and the last he assigns to the middle of the fourth century, whilst the Alexandrian Codex he considers to belong to the middle of the fifth century.

One of the most remarkable differences between these various manuscripts, in its bearing upon the orthodox

* *Vide* "The New Testament: the Authorised English Version; with Introduction, and various Readings from the three most Celebrated Manuscripts of the Original Greek Text." By Constantine Tischendorff. London: Sampson Low, Son, & Co. 1869.

doctrines of modern Christianity, consists in the entire omission from the Sinaitic and the Vatican Codex of all the verses in Mark xvi. following verse 8, and therefore including, of course, the celebrated passage (ver. 16), "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Tischendorff also tells us in his Introduction that Eusebius and Jerome (the former of whom died in the year 340) expressly state in their writing, that "*in nearly all the trustworthy copies of their time the Gospel ended with the 8th verse.*"

All we know, therefore, of the New Testament is, that it consists of a collection of ancient manuscripts, by whom written we know not, which appear to have been collected together in their present form in some remote age, but when or by whom collected there is no evidence to show. Mr. Strange, in his work "The Bible; Is it the Word of God?" * says, "There appear to have been in existence some half hundred Gospel narratives, and any amount of doctrinal epistles, which the leaders of Christianity may have thought proper to address to the different congregations. Out of such a mass of materials, all of a similar purport and stamp, there were no means of an assured and certain nature for knowing which had come by inspiration from God, and which were of mere human authorship. The acts of inspiration had not left a trace of the operation behind them. The inspired men were no longer in being. There was nothing known of a positive sort whereby to connect the Gospels, the Book of Acts, or the Apocalypse, with any imputed writer. The authenticity of the Epistles might possibly be maintained upon traditionary evidence, but they threw no light on that of the other books, which are not even cited in them. The selection, therefore, could only be a matter of pure discretion, and to be ratified by consent, and who even made it primarily is

* London: Trübner & Co. 1871.

unknown." Thus the determination which of all these documents was the Word of God was left absolutely to erring man, and not finally decided until the Council of Trent in 1545, only after much discussion. Up to this time, says Mr. Strange, the accuracy of the Scriptures depended upon chains of copyists transcribing in succession through the past centuries, the one after the other. "The early writing was a representation of continuous letters without division into words, and in making the separation of the words error would arise. The manuscripts were subject to damage and partial obliteration, rendering them difficult to decipher. Abbreviations were used in them which were not always understood. Glosses in the margin were apt to be introduced as part of the text itself; and even intentional alterations were sometimes made with a view to improvement."

So much for the history of the New Testament. We may now turn our attention to its contents.

In searching amongst the modern writers upon Christianity for a work which should succinctly summarise the latest conclusions of science and philosophy upon the questions mentioned on page 2, *ante*, which I intended to assume as already established by other writers, I was fortunate to come across the work of Mr. Greg, "The Creed of Christendom: Its Foundations Contrasted with its Superstructure."* This admirable work, which has already gone through many editions, so completely covers the whole ground which these questions embrace, that it is needless for me to do more than give a general summary of Mr. Greg's work by way of introduction to my own arguments, and leave the reader, who doubts the accuracy of Mr. Greg's conclusions, to make himself acquainted with the book in question. Mr. Greg's lucid style and clear, logical treatment of the subject, is eminently calculated to

* London: Trübner & Co. 4th Edition.

convince the reader; at the same time, there are many weighty grounds for dissenting from some of his deductions, as I hope to show further on. The three propositions which Mr. Greg tells us he has endeavoured to make clear are these:—"That the tenet of the inspiration of the Scriptures is baseless and untenable under any form or modification which leaves to it a dogmatic value;—that the Gospels are not textually faithful records of the sayings and actions of Jesus, but, occasionally at least, ascribe to him words which he never uttered, and deeds which he never did:—and that the apostles only partially comprehended, and imperfectly transmitted, the teaching of their Great Master." The first chapter of Mr. Greg's work is devoted to the question of the Inspiration of the Scriptures both of the Old and the New Testament. Mr. Greg proves, in a manner which, I think, must satisfy every mind, that however much truth the Scriptures do contain—and Mr. Greg willingly testifies to this—*they are certainly not, in every part, inspired by God.*

In regard to the Old Testament, he shows that neither the date, the authors, nor the collectors, nor the principle of selection of these writings, is known to us; and that the only proof we have of their inspiration rests on the fact, that the Jews looked upon them as inspired. Again, he urges that they nowhere affirm their own inspiration, divine origin, or infallible authority; and as to the argument that their inspiration may be inferred from the character of their contents, Mr. Greg insists that it will bear no examination. "It is true," says this writer, "that many parts of them contain views of duty, of God, and of man's relation to him, which are among the purest and loftiest that the human intellect can grasp; but it is no less true that other passages, at least as numerous and characteristic, depict feelings and opinions on these topics as low, meagre, and unworthy, as ever took their rise in savage and uncultured minds."

"We are called upon," says Mr. Greg, "to believe that Jehovah, the Ruler of all Worlds, the Pure, Spiritual, Supreme, Ineffable, Creator of the Universe—our Father who is in Heaven—so blundered in the creation of man as to repent and grieve, and find it necessary to destroy His own work—selected one favoured people from the rest of His children—sanctioned fraud—commanded cruelty—contended, and for a while in vain, with the magic of other gods—wrestled bodily with one patriarch—ate cakes and veal with another—sympathised with and shared in human passions—and manifested 'scarcely one untainted moral excellence'; and we are required to do this painful violence to our feelings and our understandings simply because these coarse conceptions prevailed some thousand years ago among a people whose history, as written by themselves, is certainly not of a nature to inspire us with any extraordinary confidence in their virtues or their intellect."

Mr. Greg very ably contends that the books which are credited to Moses were never written by him. He also instances numerous obvious and irreconcilable discrepancies in these books, all of which it is needless to repeat here. He alludes to two separate and varying accounts of the Creation (Gen. 1, 2 : 3, and Gen. 2 : 4 to 3 : 24), of the genealogy from Adam to Noah (Gen. 5 : 1-32, and Gen. 4 : 1-26), and of the flood and of the seizure of Sarah in consequence of Abraham's timid falsehood. "Gen. 20," says Mr. Greg, "places the occurrence in Gerar, and makes Abimelech the offender; whilst 12 : 10-19 places it in Egypt, and makes Pharaoh the offender; and the same document again (26 : 1-11) narrates the same occurrence, representing Abimelech as the offender and Gerar as the locality, but changing the persons of the deceivers from Abraham and Sarah to Isaac and Rebekah."

Mr. Greg next deals very exhaustively with the impossibility of reconciling the Old Testament account of the Creation with the ascertained facts of geology, and argues

that we are bound to admit "that the cosmogony of Moses was the conception of an unlearned man and of a rude age."

Mr. Greg concludes his criticism of the Old Testament by the pertinent observation, that "we have precisely the same Scriptural ground for believing that God first made the earth, and then the sun for the special benefit of the earth; that the globe was submerged by rain which lasted forty days; and that everything was destroyed except the animals which Noah packed into his ark,—as we have for believing that Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise for a transgression; that God promised Abraham to redeem the world through his progeny; and that Jacob and Moses were the subjects of the divine communications recorded as being made to them. All the statements are made in the same affirmative style, and on the same authority. The Bible equally professes to teach us *fact* on all these matters."

Considering that in this scientific age so many persons, even amongst the most orthodox of Christians, do not scruple to reject the former of these Old Testament narratives, whilst they, nevertheless, adhere firmly to the truth of the latter, the reader will readily see what an important bearing this argument has upon the doctrine of the Fall of Man, &c., expounded by modern orthodox theology. This I have further alluded to on p. 24, *post*.

As to the argument for the inspiration of the Old Testament, drawn from the miraculous and prophetic power of the writers, Mr. Greg instances—in proof that such powers do not prove the possessor to be divinely inspired—"the case of the magicians of Pharaoh, who could perform many, though not all, of the miracles of Moses; from the case of Aaron, who, though miraculously gifted, and God's chosen High Priest, yet helped the Israelites to desert Jehovah, and bow down before the golden calf; and from the history of Balaam, who, though in daily communication with God, and specially inspired by Him, yet accepted a bribe from

His enemies to curse His people, and pertinaciously endeavoured to perform his part of the contract." As to prophecy, Mr. Greg says, "For one prediction which was justified, it is easy to point to two which were falsified by the event." As an instance of these, I may mention one amongst a crowd of others which Mr. Greg has collected in his book. "Isaiah (17 : 1) pronounces on Damascus a threat of ruin as emphatic as any that was pronounced against Tyre, Egypt, or Babylon. 'It is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.' Yet," says Mr. Greg, "Damascus is to this day the most flourishing city in those countries."

"It is probably not too much to affirm that we have no instance in the prophetical books of the Old Testament of a prediction, in the case of which we possess, at once and combined, clear and unsuspecting proof of the date, the precise event, and the inability of human sagacity to foresee it." Again, in reference to the alleged prophecies in the Old Testament concerning our Saviour, Mr. Greg denies that his opponents "are able to lay their finger on a single Old Testament prediction clearly referring to Jesus Christ, *intended by the utterers of it to relate to him*, prefiguring his character and career, and manifestly fulfilled in his appearance on earth."

It is out of place here for me to reproduce all Mr. Greg's able arguments by which he establishes his various propositions, but I think every candid reader will admit that he succeeds in showing what I myself have premised, viz., that *all the statements in the Old Testament cannot be accepted as coming from God*.

Mr. Greg next turns his attention to the New Testament and the question of its inspiration. Speaking of its history, he says, "The writings which compose the volume called by us the New Testament, had assumed their present collective form, and were generally received throughout the Christian Churches, about the end of the second century.

They were collected out of a number of others; but by whom they were selected, or what principle guided the selection, history leaves in doubt."

Mr. Greg concludes that we can discover no ground for believing the New Testament to be inspired or infallible, and that, like the Old, it must be regarded merely as a collection of records, not revelations. If the reader wishes to understand how Mr. Greg works out these conclusions, I must refer him to his pages. I have assumed these conclusions to be fact for the purpose of my own work, and as their correctness appears to my mind to be satisfactorily established by Mr. Greg, it would be superfluous for me to go over the same ground. As I have quoted one or two of the most telling of Mr. Greg's points in support of the non-inspiration of the Old Testament, I may do the same in regard to the New. Alluding to the Gospels he says, "If the accounts of the same transactions agree, where was the necessity for more than one? If they differ (as they notoriously do), it is certain that only one can be inspired,—and which is that one?" Further says he, "The Gospels nowhere affirm, or even intimate, their own inspiration." In the apostolic writings we find that Paul "expressly declares himself to be 'speaking by the word of the Lord,' in at least one case where he is manifestly and admittedly in error, viz., in 1 Thess. 4 : 15 ;" and, moreover, says Mr. Greg, "the apostles, all of whom are supposed to be alike inspired, differed among themselves, contradicted, depreciated, and 'withstood' one another."

Mr. Greg also instances the mistakes of the apostles as proof that they were not inspired. "The error of Paul about the approaching end of the world was shared by all the apostles—James 5 : 8; 1 Peter 4 : 7; 2 Peter 3 : 12; 1 John 2 : 18; Jude, verse 18."

In a chapter devoted entirely to the origin of the Gospel, Mr. Greg, with his characteristic clearness, combats the current idea "that the four evangelists were eye-witnesses

(or the amanuenses of eye-witnesses) of the events which they relate; and that we have, in fact, embodied in their narratives four independent and corroborative testimonies to the words and deeds of Christ." Mr. Greg advances in his successive examination of each of the three Gospels very sound reasons for concluding that the authors of the Gospels attributed to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, were not eye-witnesses of what they relate. As to the authorship of John's Gospel, about which, says Mr. Greg, "there has been much learned and anxious controversy amongst theologians," he decides against its being the work of the Apostle John. Strauss, in his "New Life of Jesus," finally and confidently decides against the authenticity of John's Gospel; and so does Renan in the 13th edition, 1867, of his "Vie de Jésus." "One argument," says Mr. Greg, "against the supposition of John having been the author of the fourth Gospel has impressed my mind very forcibly. It is this: that several of the most remarkable events recorded by the other evangelists, at which we are told by them that only *Peter, James, and John were present*, and of which, therefore, John alone of all the evangelists could have spoken with the distinctness and authority of an eye-witness, are entirely omitted—we may say *ignored*, by him. Such are the raising of Jairus's daughter, the Transfiguration, the agony in Gethsemane." . . . "We find that he does, on more than one occasion, relate events of less moment already recorded in the other Gospels, as the feeding of the five thousand, the anointing of Jesus' feet, &c.; but *all the events said to have been witnessed by John alone, are omitted by John alone!*"

Mr. Greg gives his readers briefly the results of the investigations of the most acute and learned divines of Germany upon the question of the origin of the Gospels. The prevalent hypothesis is, says Mr. Greg, "that one of the evangelists wrote first, and that the others copied him, with alterations, additions, and omissions, dictated by their

own judgment or by extraneous sources of information. Matthew is generally considered to have been the earliest writer; but critics differ in the relative order they assign to Mark and Luke—some, as Mill, Hug, and Wetstein, conceiving that Luke copied both from Mark and Matthew; and others, as De Wette and Griesbach, arguing that Mark was the latest in order of time, and made use of both his predecessors. Mr. Kenrick, in a masterly analysis (Prosp. Rev. xxi.), has, however, we think, succeeded in making it more than probable that Mark's Gospel was both first in order of time, and in fidelity of narration."

Turning now to the contents of the four Gospels, Mr. Greg proceeds to point out amongst other discrepancies the well known variance between the genealogy of Jesus as given by Matthew and the same as given by Luke. "According to the universal expectation," says Mr. Greg, "the Messiah was to be born of the seed of Abraham, and the lineage and tribe of David. Accordingly, the Gospel opens with an elaborate genealogy of Jesus, tracing him through David to Abraham. Now, in the *first* place, this genealogy is not correct; *secondly*, if the remainder of the chapter is to be received as true, it is in no sense the genealogy of Jesus; and, *thirdly*, it is wholly and irreconcilably at variance with that given by Luke."

The genealogy given by Matthew is the genealogy of *Joseph*, "who, we are assured, was in no sense whatever the father or any relation at all of Jesus." . . . "The story of the Incarnation," says Mr. Greg, "and the genealogy are obviously at variance; and no ingenuity, unscrupulously as it has been applied, can produce even the shadow of an agreement."

Again, as to the contradiction between Matthew and Luke's genealogies, Mr. Greg says, "The most desperate efforts of divines have been unable to effect even the semblance of a reconciliation. Not only does Matthew give twenty-six generations between David and Joseph, where

Luke has forty-one, but they trace the descent through an entirely different line of ancestry." In verses 22 and 23, Matthew's allusion to the fulfilment of the prophecy (see Isa. 8 : 2-4) concerning Jesus is quoted by Mr. Greg as "one of the many instances in which this evangelist quotes prophecies as intended for Jesus, and as fulfilled in him, which have not the slightest relation to him or his career." Another similar example of Matthew's mistakes Mr. Greg gives by a comparison of Matthew 2 : 13-15 with Hosea 11 : 1

The reader of Mr. Greg's work will find numerous examples of similar supposed fulfilments of prophecy which he shows clearly to be nothing of the kind.

Mr. Greg next proceeds to examine critically each of the four Gospels separately. Without attempting to reproduce his able arguments, I may allude to a few of the most striking objections raised by him. He points out the extremely doubtful authenticity of verse 18, Matthew chap. 16, where Christ commits the keys of heaven to Peter. This verse has no parallel in the narratives of the other evangelists although they confirm the rest. Mr. Greg gives also good reasons, which I cannot here reproduce, for concluding that Christ never uttered the words in Matt. 23 : 35, where "he is represented as speaking in the past tense of an event which did not occur till thirty-five years after his death."

Chapter 28 : 19, contains, says Mr. Greg, "another passage which we may say with almost certainty never came from the mouth of Christ," since the three-fold allusion to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, does not appear elsewhere in the Gospels, and is evidently borrowed from the ecclesiastical ritual. "Many critics," says Mr. Greg, "in consequence regard it as a subsequent interpolation."

Mr. Greg next attacks the alleged predictions by Christ of his own death and resurrection, which he also considers, for very good reasons, were never uttered by Jesus, and must have been ascribed to him after the event. He adduces clear proof, which the reader must peruse for himself, that

—in spite of the alleged predictions—his death and resurrection were wholly unexpected by his disciples—"they were utterly confounded by the one and could not believe the other." Further on, Mr. Greg shows that the prophecies of the second coming of Christ (Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 17 : 22-37; 21 : 5-36) evidently meant "that the coming of Christ to judge the world should follow *immediately* the destruction of the Holy City, and should take place during the lifetime of the then existing generation." . . . "And if these predictions really proceeded from Jesus, he was entirely in error on the subject, and the prophetic spirit was not in him; for not only did his advent not follow close on the destruction of Jerusalem, but 1800 years have since elapsed, and neither he nor the preliminary signs which were to announce him have yet appeared. If these predictions did *not* proceed from him, then the evangelist has taken the liberty of putting into the mouth of Christ words and announcements which Christ never uttered."

In criticising Luke, Mr. Greg points out that chapter 1, from verse 5-80, exhibits many remarkable discrepancies with the corresponding narrative in Matthew.

Speaking of John's Gospel, Mr. Greg makes the following remarks, which he illustrates by lengthy extracts from the evangelist:—

"Another peculiarity of this Gospel—arising, probably, out of its controversial origin—is its exaltation of dogma over morality—of belief over spiritual affection. In the other Gospels, piety, charity, forgiveness of injuries, purity of life, are preached by Christ as the titles to his kingdom and his Father's favour. Whereas in John's Gospel, as in his Epistles, belief in Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Logos—belief, in fact, in the evangelist's view of his nature—is constantly represented as the one thing needful." . . . "The discourses are often touchingly eloquent and tender; the narrative is full of beauty, pathos, and nature; but we miss the simple and intelligible truth, the noble, yet practical morality of the other histories; we find

in it more of Christ than Christianity, and more of John than of Jesus."

My object in so fully quoting Mr. Greg's arguments and conclusions is not to shake any one's belief in the general authenticity of the Scriptures, but to avail myself of the answer which the researches of able writers like Mr. Greg has given us to the objections of those good people who are firmly convinced that orthodox theology—*i.e.*, THE CHRISTIANITY OF TO-DAY—is based upon the very words of Christ and must therefore be true.

Mr. Greg and other writers have abundantly shown that the Gospels cannot be taken as literally true. They have conclusively proved, by evidence on the face of these writings, that they could not have been inspired by God, but are merely the historical records of fallible men. Since, therefore, we may and must exercise our reason in rejecting such passages as those I have instanced from Mr. Greg's work, it is equally clear that we must not blindly accept texts which are contrary to reason and justice, simply because certain doctrines of orthodox theology are based upon them. Much less must we pin our faith to the doctrines themselves, when we know that the foundations on which they rest are unstable, and when the natural instincts of the soul tell us that they are contrary to God's attributes as a just and merciful Father.

"Doctrines," says Mr. Greg, "which unsophisticated men feel to be inadmissible and repellent, and which those who hold them most devotedly secretly admit to be fearful and perplexing, are founded on particular passages which contradict the *generality* of Christ's teaching, but which, being attributed to him by the evangelists, have been regarded as endowed with an authority which it would be profane and dangerous to resist."

Mr. Greg then proceeds to show that several of these passages did not emanate from Christ, and that in all probability none of them did.

Commencing with the doctrine that Belief is necessary to Salvation—a doctrine which Mr. Greg characterises as “one of the most untenable, unphilosophical, and uncharitable of the orthodox creed, stamped with the impress of the bad passions of humanity,”—he admits “that the Gospels contain many texts which clearly affirm or fully imply a doctrine so untenable and harsh.”

“The most specific assertion of the tenet in question, couched in that positive, terse, sententious, and damnatory language so dear to orthodox divines, is found in the spurious portion of the Gospel of Mark (chap. 16 : 16).” Of the last twelve verses of this Gospel, Mr. Greg tells us, as we have seen even Tischendorff also admits, that “*their spuriousness is established beyond question.*”

The doctrine is taught in none of the other Gospels but in John, which contains several similar passages to that of Mark. Mr. Greg shows good reason for concluding that these passages in John never originated with Jesus, but all point to John as their author. “They are all too redolent of the temper of that apostle who wished to call down fire from heaven on an unbelieving village, and who *was rebuked by Jesus for the savage and presumptuous suggestion.*”

Mr. Greg further points out that the spirit of these passages—as, in fact, also the whole doctrine—is “at variance with the spirit of the mild and benevolent Jesus; so it is too obviously unsound not to have been recognised by one whose clear and grand intelligence was informed and enlightened by so pure a heart.”

With reference to the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, and the texts which are adduced from the four Gospels in support of it, Mr. Greg declares it to be “clearly negatived by the whole tenour of the synoptical Gospels, and even by some passages in the fourth Gospel; and though it is difficult to read the narrative of his career with an unforestalled mind without being clear that Jesus had no

notion of such a belief himself, and would have repudiated it with horror, it can yet appeal to several isolated portions and texts as suggesting and confirming, if not asserting it. On close examination, however, it will be seen that all these passages are to be found either in the fourth Gospel — which," says Mr. Greg, "we have already shown reason to conclude is, throughout, an unscrupulous and most inexact paraphrase of Christ's teaching—or, in those portions of the three first Gospels which, on other accounts and from independent trains of argument, have been selected as, at least, of questionable authenticity."

Mr. Greg points out that the passages which appear most confirmatory of Christ's Deity, are the narratives of the Incarnation and the Miraculous Conception in Matthew and Luke, and these he has very fully considered and shown almost with certainty "to be fabulous or mythical."

On such an all-important subject I cannot do better than again quote Mr. Greg's own words.

"The two narratives do not harmonise with each other; they neutralise and negative the genealogies on which depended so large a portion of the proof of Jesus being the Messiah;* the marvellous statement they contain is not referred to in any subsequent portion of the two Gospels, and is tacitly, but positively, negated by several passages; it is never mentioned in the Acts or in the Epistles, and was evidently unknown to all the Apostles; and, finally, the tone of the narrative, especially in Luke, is poetical and legendary, and bears a marked similarity to the stories contained in the apocryphal Gospels."

"The expression, Son of God," says Mr. Greg, "can in no sense mean that he was *physically* the Son of God, or a partaker of the divine nature, inasmuch as the very same

* Mr. Greg says in a note, "The Messiah must, according to Jewish prophecy, be a lineal descendant of David; this Christ was, according to the genealogies; this he was not, if the miraculous conception be a fact. If, therefore, Jesus came into being as Matthew and Luke affirm, we do not see how he could have been the Messiah."

expression was frequently applied to others; and as, indeed, 'Son of God' was, in the common parlance of the Jews, simply a prophet, a man whom God had sent, or to whom he had spoken."

Mr. Greg admits that in John's Gospel there are, however, constant endeavours to make out a superhuman nature for Christ, but he considers these passages have been proved to be ungenune. "Can any one," asks Mr. Greg, "read the Epistles, or the three first Gospels—or even the fourth—and not at once repudiate the notion that Jesus was, and knew himself to be, the Creator of the World?—which John affirms him to have been."

Coming next to the doctrine of the eternity of future punishments, which he characterises as "the most *impossible* of the tenets included in the popular creed:" "It rests," says Mr. Greg, "upon, and is confirmed by, one single Gospel text—Matt. 25: 46." The doctrine, he contends, is diametrically opposed, not only to all that we can conceive or accept of God's attributes, "but to the whole spirit and teaching of our Great Master. It is at variance with other texts and with the general view * gathered from authentic Scripture, which teaches the 'perishing,' the 'death,' of the wicked, not their everlasting life in torments. And, finally, the isolated text in question occurs in one only of the Gospels,—and occurs there (as will be seen by comparing Matt. 25: 30, with 24: 30) in immediate connection with the prophecy as to the coming of the end of the world within the lifetime of the then existing generation,—a prophecy, the erroneousness of which is now demonstrated, and which there is, to say the least, no need for believing ever to have come out of the mouth of Christ."

Lastly, coming to the texts on which rest the doctrine of

* "See countless arguments," says Mr. Greg, in a note, "from the pens, not of unbelievers, but of qualified divines—among later ones, 'Harmony of Scripture on future Punishments,' by the Rev. S. Minton, and a paper by 'Anglicanus,' in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1872."

the Atonement, Mr. Greg points out that they are to be found entirely in the Epistles, and only "*three* texts in the Evangelists can be appealed to for even partial confirmation. In Matt. 20 : 28, it is said, 'The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life *a ransom for many*,' an expression which," says Mr. Greg, "may *countenance* the doctrine, but assuredly does not contain it. Again, in Matt. 26 : 28, we find, 'This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many *for the remission of sins*.' Mark (14 : 24) and Luke (21 : 20), however, who gave the same sentence, *both omit the significant expression*; while John omits, not only the expression, but *the entire narrative of the institution of the Eucharist*, which is said elsewhere to have been the occasion of it. In the fourth Gospel, John the Baptist is represented as saying to Jesus (1 : 29), 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,' an expression which may possibly be intended to convey the doctrine, but which occurs," says Mr. Greg, "in what we have already shown to be about the most apocryphal portion of the whole Gospel."

Having shown that the Christianity of the orthodox theology is not proved by the four Gospels, Mr. Greg proceeds to consider how far they are to be evidenced by the Epistles.

He questions the reliability of the Acts of the Apostles as a source for proving the special doctrines preached by the Apostles, inasmuch as the writer describes addresses and conversations which he was not present at, and could not have had at first hand; in fact he has "evidently allowed himself the freedom indulged in by all writers of antiquity—of composing speeches in the names of his actors; and thus the discourses, both of Paul and Peter, can only be regarded as proceeding from Luke himself." "We have," says Mr. Greg, "the beautiful oration of Paul at Athens, when we know that he was quite alone" (Acts 17 : 14, 15).

For similar examples quoted by Mr. Greg, I must refer the reader to his work. "All these are given," says he, "in precisely the style and manner of an ear-witness." "Hence," concludes Mr. Greg, "*the Acts are not to be relied on as verbatim reports.*"

Turning to the Epistles, which, undoubtedly, express the real opinion of their writers, Mr. Greg shows that "of fifteen Epistles, of which we can pronounce, with tolerable certainty, that they are of apostolic origin, two only proceeded from the companions of Jesus, *and the remaining thirteen from a man who had never seen him*, save in a vision, nor heard his teaching, nor learnt from his disciples; a converted persecutor, who boasted that he had received his instructions from direct supernatural communication."

Mr. Greg contends that the Apostles are not infallible or certain guides, because they "disagreed among themselves in their exposition of the nature and constituents of their Master's system,—and this too in matters of no small significance."

Mr. Greg gives abundant examples in illustration of the preceding proposition, which I cannot reproduce here. Again, he urges, that they cannot be held infallible teachers, because they unanimously and unquestionably believed and taught some opinions which we know to be erroneous, as for instance, "that the end of the world was at hand, and would arrive in the lifetime of the then existing generation." This statement Mr. Greg also abundantly illustrates by quotations from the Epistles. Lastly, he quotes other examples in proof of the third proposition that "the teaching of the Apostles in some important particulars, but still more in its general tone, differed from that of their Master, as the latter is recorded in the synoptical Gospels." Amongst other texts, see 2 Thess. 1 : 6-8; 2 : 11, 12; 1 Tim. 1 : 20; 2 Tim. 4 : 14; Gal. 1 : 8, 9.

Mr. Greg's object in pointing out discrepancies and errors

in the New Testament, of course, is to undermine their supposed infallibility; and he very properly objects that documents which are obviously *not* infallible when they are dealing with *facts* can hardly be held to conclusively prove the truth of the painful and perplexing doctrines of modern orthodoxy, or the accuracy of the texts on which they rest.

One might carry Mr. Greg's argument a little further. As he has himself pointed out that the history of the creation of the world is proved and admitted to be fabulous both by many divines and all scientific men, and as the statements relating to these matters are placed side by side with the account of the fall of man—the supposed sin of our first parents Adam and Eve—owing to whose trifling disobedience we are asked to believe that a merciful and just God (who Himself created them fallible man and woman) condemned their innocent descendants throughout all time to eternal damnation (saving only a comparatively small number of believing Christians), surely it is not too much to say that *this account of God's decree is quite as fabulous as the historical facts we have alluded to*. Why, in fact, should we reject one statement and accept the other when both are alike improbable? If this be so—if God did not hold all mankind to be lost sinners, is it not extremely probable that the doctrine of the Atonement rests on a very unstable foundation? This doctrine—as the reader knows—teaches us that whereas, by our first parents, sin first entered into the world, and whereas all men are naturally depraved and deserving of God's wrath, *therefore* He has sent His Son as our Saviour; and Christ's death was to be the atonement for the aforesaid original sin, thus reconciling us once more to our Creator! If however, the Old Testament account of this original sin be unreliable, and if, as I believe I have shown further on, the supposed inborn wickedness of all men was never taught by Christ, and is directly opposed to what He did teach, we

shall be naturally prepared to allow that Mr. Greg has not unfairly questioned the Gospel foundations on which this doctrine rests; and in showing that it is a doctrine taught by the Apostles in their Epistles and not by Christ in the Gospels, he does good service to the cause of truth.

So far Mr. Greg's object is identical with my own—namely, to show that the Christianity of the Thirty-nine Articles was not taught by Christ. Mr. Greg's work is, however, hardly likely to afford much consolation to the man who longs for some convincing proof of a future life—some sure foundation on which to rest his faith. His object would appear to lie more in pulling down than building up—in undermining the foundations of modern Christianity rather than in giving in exchange an abundant foundation for a purer and higher Christianity. This is more the object I have set myself to do; and whilst I am greatly indebted to Mr. Greg for his scholarly work in taking to pieces the complicated structure of modern orthodox theology, and preparing the ground, so to speak, for the erection of a truer and firmer faith, I venture to think it a pity that this able writer did not carry his labours further, and erect out of the materials which the New Testament affords the true **CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST.**

Mr. Greg expresses, it is true, his ardent admiration for “the grand features, the pervading tone of Christ's doctrines or his character, which still present to us a clear, consistent, and splendid delineation.” He claims that by destroying the absolute certainty with regard to any one especial text or scene he has prepared the way for “those who seek to learn Christ's spirit, that they may imbibe it and comprehend his views of virtue and of God, that they may draw strength and consolation from these fountains of living water.”

For Mr. Greg's services, and those of all the other Bible scholars who have by their critical researches succeeded in

removing the sting of particular texts on which the uncharitable, inhuman, and unchristian doctrines of orthodox theology are based, every earnest seeker after truth must be profoundly grateful. It is upon the ground so cleared that I have endeavoured to put together again a few of the corner stones of the Christianity which Christ gave to the world. Others, doubtless, have done the same before. I do not presume to claim the merit of any new discoveries, in stringing together the following texts, and commenting on them; but, so far as I am concerned, the plan of the following work is certainly original, and worked out at first hand.

It was only *after* the following pages were written that I perused the foregoing work, and also that of Mr. Matthew Arnold—"Literature and Dogma," which so ably prepare the ground for such a work as mine.

The latter writer, I found, had written a work which, though entirely different in his treatment of the subject from my own—as he also is superior in style and argument—comes substantially to almost the same conclusion. Notwithstanding this, I have ventured to think that my labours need not on that account be thrown away. The present work is necessarily so different from his, that it will doubtless appeal to quite another public, and the same truths, in homelier language, and differently treated, may perhaps find quite as useful a place in the world of literature.

As I have endeavoured to show that Christ preached benevolence, beneficence, and faith, and these only as necessary to salvation, so the burden of Mr. Matthew Arnold's theme is, that both the Old and the New Testament teach *conduct* or *righteousness* as the one thing needful to salvation, and not doctrine.

"And certainly," says Mr. Arnold, on page 19, "we need not go far about to prove that conduct or 'righteousness,' which is the object of religion, is in a special manner the object of Bible-religion. The word 'righteousness' is the

master-word of the Old Testament. *Keep judgment, and do righteousness! Cease to do evil; learn to do well!* these words being taken in their plainest sense of conduct." . . . "The great concern of the New Testament is likewise righteousness, but righteousness reached through particular means, righteousness by means of Jesus Christ."

In explanation of 'righteousness,' according to Christ, we find on page 93 the following :—

"Self-examination, self-renouncement, and mildness were, therefore, the great means by which Jesus Christ renewed righteousness and religion. All these means are indicated in the Old Testament: *God requireth truth in the inward parts! Not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure! Seek meekness!* But how far more strongly are they forced upon the attention in the New Testament, and set up clearly as the central mark for our endeavours. *Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup that the outside may be clean also! Whoever will come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me! Learn of me that I am mild and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest in your souls!* So that, although personal religion is clearly recommended in the Old Testament, nevertheless, these injunctions of the New Testament effect so much more for the extrication and establishment of personal religion than the general exhortation in the Old, to *offer the sacrifice of righteousness, to do judgment*, that, comparatively with the Old, the New Testament may be said to have really founded inward and personal religion. While the Old Testament says: *Attend to conduct!* the New Testament says: *Attend to the feelings and dispositions, whence conduct proceeds!*"

The difference between the righteousness of the Old Testament and the righteousness of Christ is explained by Mr. Arnold. Christ's rule of action is found in what Mr. Arnold calls Christ's *secret*, of which the following may, says he (on page 207), "very well stand as pre-eminently representative: '*He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*'"

Whosoever will come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." "This maxim," says Mr. Arnold, "contains Christ's *secret*, the secret by which, emphatically, his Gospel 'brought life and immortality to light.'"

Again (on page 220), he says, "This secret of Jesus, as we call it, will be found applicable to all the thousand problems which the exercise of conduct daily offers; it alone can solve them all happily, and may indeed be called 'a fount of water springing up into everlasting life.' And, in general, wherever the words *life* and *death* are used by Jesus, we shall do well to have his 'secret' at hand; for in his thoughts, on these occasions, it is never far off."

Such maxims as those of the Sermon on the Mount "are but the *applications* of the method and secret of Jesus; and the method and secret are capable of yet an infinite number more of such applications."

Applying his interpretation of "Christianity according to Christ" to the "Christianity of To-day," Mr. Arnold comes to a similar conclusion to that which is come to in the following pages—namely, *that orthodox theology is not Christianity.*

He says (on page 382): "Now, Christianity is that which righteousness really is. Therefore, if something called Christianity prevails, and yet the promises are not satisfied, the inference is, that this *something* is not that which righteousness really is, and therefore not really Christianity. And as the course of the world is perpetually establishing the pre-eminence of righteousness, and confounding whatever denies this pre-eminence, so, too, the course of the world is for ever establishing what righteousness really is—that is to say, true Christianity—and confounding whatever pretends to be true Christianity and is not."

"Now, just as the constitution of things turned out to be against the great unrighteous kingdom of the heathen world, and against all the brilliant Ishmaels we have seen since,

so the constitution of things turns out to be against all false presentations of Christianity, such as the theology of the Fathers or Protestant theology. They do not work successfully, they do not reach the aim, they do not bring the world to the fruition of the promises* made to righteousness. And the reason is, because they substitute for what is really righteousness something else. *Catholic dogma or Lutheran justification by faith they substitute for the method and secret of Jesus.*"

"The world," continues Mr. Arnold, "does homage to the pre-eminence of righteousness," and Christian churches do recommend the method and secret of Jesus, "although the full effect is much thwarted and deadened by the false way in which the doctrine is presented."

"It is often said : If Jesus Christ came now, his religion would be rejected. And this is only another way of saying that the world now, as the Jewish people formerly, has something which thwarts and confuses its perception of what righteousness really is. It is so ; and *the thwarting cause is the same now as then,—the dogmatic system current, the so-called orthodox theology.*"

I need not quote further from Mr. Arnold's book. The foregoing extracts give an outline of his argument, and are in substance the burden of my theme, too ; but, as before stated, my acquaintance with "Literature and Dogma" dates *after* the following pages were written, and, since my conclusions are confirmed by such an eminent writer and scholar as Mr. Arnold, I think I may reasonably be excused for advancing beforehand the foregoing quotations in support of the views I have myself expressed in the following pages.

I propose, in another chapter, which will more properly come in at the end of this book, to make some more observations on that portion of Mr. Greg's work

Mr. Arnold refers to Isa. 60 : 18 ; 32 : 5 ; 60 : 21 ; Jer. 31 : 33, 34 ; Isa. 60 : 20.

which deals with the evidence afforded by the New Testament, in favour of the belief in *prayer*, in a *future state*, and other articles of Christian belief. After first stating my own views, and the grounds for them, the reader will be more prepared to understand how I presume to differ from Mr. Greg's somewhat gloomy and unsatisfactory conclusions on these all-important questions.

PART I.

THE RELIGION OF JESUS.

CHAPTER I.

The Practical Teachings of Christ.

I PROPOSE to divide the teachings of Christ under certain heads, so as to show, as far as possible, how much sanction is given to the various creeds that are built upon his doctrines. First and foremost, as supporting the particular interpretation of Christianity, which it is the purpose of this work to enunciate, I shall give those teachings which relate to practical every-day life.

Christ's Commandments.

All Christians must admit that the positive commands of Christ are entitled to our first consideration, and in any discussion of the merits of true religion they must necessarily have far more weight with his followers than the teachings of the Church. The Thirty-nine Articles, at best, are but Christianity at second-hand. In the New Testament, on the other hand, we find the actual words of Christ in answer to the all-important question, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

In answer to this question we do not find Christ saying, as the Church does—"Believe in my divinity;" "Believe that I am sent to atone for your sins. Without this you cannot be saved," &c. Christ says—

*"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."**

(Matt. 19 : 17.)

When asked "Which?" Jesus said—

"Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The last commandment, not being one of the Ten Commandments given to Moses, may be taken as the personal command of Christ. Jesus also adds in the 21st verse—

"If thou wilt be *perfect*, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: *and come and follow me.*"

St. Mark (10 : 19), in relating the same incident, makes no mention of the commandment "to love thy neighbour," but inserts another which Matthew omits, namely—

"Defraud not."

The injunction to sell and give to the poor is confirmed by Mark. St. Luke's Gospel contains the same narrative, whilst St. John omits it.

On another occasion St. Matthew tells us he was interrogated as to which was the great commandment of the law, and replied—

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

(Matt. 22 : 37.)

St. Mark's account (12 : 30) of this answer of Christ

* In all the following Scripture quotations I have introduced the italics myself, in order to emphasise such words as I consider specially important in the following argument.

agrees with that of Matthew, excepting that he makes Christ add—

"There is none other commandment greater than these."

St. Luke (10 : 28) confirms St. Matthew's version of the above, but makes Christ add the all-important words—

"This do, and thou shalt live."

According to St. John, Christ emphatically insisted upon obedience to his commandments, saying—

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

(John 14 : 15.)

"He that hath my commandments, *and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me*, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father."

(John 14 : 21.)

"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

(John 8 : 47.)

"If ye *keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love*; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

(John 15 : 10.)

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

(John 15 : 12.)

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

(John 15 : 14.)

"If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him."

(John 14 : 23.)

"He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings."

(John 14 : 24.)

Finally, he charges his disciples—

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I have commanded you*."

(Matt. 28 : 20.)

In John also we find Christ saying—

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*" *

(John 13 : 34.)

* I cannot pass over this important text without drawing the reader's attention to its bearing upon the interminable dissensions which divide modern Christian sects.

Having now proved conclusively the immense importance of obeying Christ's teachings, let us see what he did teach as amongst the practical duties of a Christian. I have classified the most positive of these commands under the following heads :—

Non-Resistance.

In place of revenge and retaliation, Christ taught—

“That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” (Matt. 5 : 40.)

Luke contains the same injunctions, but he makes Christ add further—

“Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.”
(Luke 6 : 30.)

Love of Enemies.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; *that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*”
(Matt. 5 : 43.)

St. Luke (6 : 27) confirms this, but St. Mark and St. John do not seem to allude to it.

Almsgiving.

We have seen that, in the first three Gospels, Christ enjoined an inquirer to sell what he possessed, and give to the poor. St. Luke repeats the same injunction in other words—

“Sell that ye have, and give alms.” (Luke 12 : 33.)

“Give alms of such things as ye have.” (Luke 11 : 41.)

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.”
(Luke 6 : 38.)

Worldly Cares.

According to St. Matthew (6 : 25) and St. Luke (12 : 22) we are told Christ enjoined his hearers to

“Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.”

In John (6 : 27) also, Christ says—

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth.”

Riches.

In Matthew (6 : 19) Christ denounces the accumulation of wealth—

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.”

In Luke also (12 : 15)—

“Take heed, and beware of covetousness : for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

Speaking of the rich man and his possessions, the same writer makes Christ say—

“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

(Luke 12 : 20.)

Humility.

This is one of the qualities which Christ requires of those who claim to be followers of him.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” (Matt. 11 : 29.)

“For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

(Luke 14 : 11.)

“Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.”

(Matt. 5 : 5.)

Hypocrisy

is one of the vices Christ severely denounces. Addressing the Pharisees, St. Luke tells us, he spoke as follows :—

"Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." (Luke 11 : 39; Matt. 23 : 25.)

Self-Glorification and Ambition.

"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets."

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." (Matt. 6 : 1.)

Forgiveness.

"Blessed are the *peacemakers*: for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt. 5 : 9.)

"And when ye stand praying, *forgive* if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." (Mark 11 : 25.)

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, *your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*"* (Matt. 6 : 14.)

Judging and Condemning Others.

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

Mercy.

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6 : 36.)

"Blessed are the merciful: *for they shall obtain mercy.*" (Matt. 5 : 7.)

Surfeiting, Drunkenness, and Worldliness.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." (Luke 21 : 34.)

The Golden Rule.

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke 6 : 31.)

* In this and other texts which I have emphasised (see pp. 33 and 34), Christ's words imply that salvation is offered to those who obey. They are therefore specially important to the argument.

Unselfishness.

“For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them *of whom ye hope to receive*, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, *hoping for nothing again*: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest.”
(Luke 6 : 34.)

Self-Denial.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”
(Matt. 16 : 24; Mark 8 : 34; Luke 9 : 23.)

Striving for Righteousness.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and *thirst after righteousness*: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5 : 6.)

Suffering for Righteousness' Sake.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*.”
(Matt. 5 : 10.)

Love One Another.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Definition of a neighbour, as any one requiring our help.)
(Luke 10 : 27-37.)

*Inward Purity.**

“He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”
(Matt. 5 : 28.)

“Out of the heart proceed murders, adulteries, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man.”
(Matt. 15 : 19.)

* Most of the texts which treat of the kingdom of heaven within us, the inner man, the new birth, &c., I have collected in a subsequent chapter, where I have specially commented on them.

Faith in God's Providing.

"If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

(Luke 12 : 28.)

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (Matt. 6 : 31, 32.)

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye shall receive them*, and ye shall have them."

(Mark 21 : 24.)

Prayer.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is *in secret*: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ; thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven ; give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

(Matt. 6 : 9-13, and Luke 11 : 2.)

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought *always to pray*, and not to faint."

(Luke 18 : 1.)

"Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you."

(John 15 : 16.)

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven *give good things to them that ask him?*"

(Matt. 7 : 11.)

Good Works.

Christ by no means teaches a religion of mere passive belief and faith, without deeds of beneficence. He requires much more than mere religious observances in those who wish to be saved, as witness the following important text :—

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7 : 21.)

In Matthew and Mark (3 : 35) we even find Christ distinguishing as his *brethren* such as comply with this injunction :—

"For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

In the following passage, this is still more strongly emphasised :—

"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. *He that doeth good is of God*; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." (3 John 11.)

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see *your good works*, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5 : 16.)

"For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. *A good man*, out of the good treasure of his heart, *bringeth forth that which is good*; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. *And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and *doeth them*, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock, and when the flood arose the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and *could not shake it*; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth and *doeth not*, is like a man that, without a foundation, built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great." (Luke 6 : 43-49.)

Again, in alluding to the last day, Christ tells us in Matthew (16 : 27), that—

"The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man *according to his works*."

Whilst John (5 : 29) is equally clear—

“*They that have done good*, unto the resurrection of life ;
and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection
of damnation.”

Much more explicit is Christ in alluding to the reward and punishment to be meted out to the good and the bad on the last day, in the following important passages in Christ's own words, from Matthew 25 : 31, *et seq.* :—

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory ; and before him shall be gathered all nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”

The following are to be the qualifications of those who seek *to inherit eternal life* :—

“I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

Then Christ proceeds to explain, in verse 40, that he does not expect or require the performance of these deeds of benevolence towards himself personally, but *towards the poor* ; for he says—

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Further, in verse 41, *et seq.*, we are told distinctly that Christ will thus address those who have not *done these things* :—

“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

So also Matt. 8 : 12 ; where the furnace of fire is threatened against “*them which do iniquity*.” In all these texts it is to be observed, that, unlike the teaching of Churches, Christ says not a word about *belief* as being necessary to salvation. The only qualification for eternal life alluded to (in this part of Christ's teachings) is *beneficence*. Upon this I shall comment hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

The Practical Teachings of the Apostles.

ALTHOUGH it will be seen from the foregoing extracts that the practical teachings of Christ are very important, we shall discover from our next branch of New Testament Christianity that the Apostles also wrote and uttered much sound advice of a practical nature.

Obey Christ's Commandments.

"And hereby we do know that we know him, *if we keep his commandments*. He that saith, I know him, and *keepeth not his commandments*, is a liar, and *the truth is not in him*. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." (1 John 2 : 3.)

"And he that *keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him*, and he in him." (1 John 3 : 24.)

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey him*." (Heb. 5 : 9.)

Live as Christ Lived.

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John 2 : 6.)

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." (2 Cor. 4 : 10.)

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." (Colos. 2 : 6.)

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5 : 25.)

Love One Another.

This great commandment is repeated so often by the Apostles, that to quote every passage would be quite needless.

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well : but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

(James 2 : 9.)

"Speak not evil one of another." (James 4 : 11.)

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this ; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

(Gal. 5 : 14.)

"Love one another : for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

(Rom. 13 : 8.)

"He that loveth not knoweth not God ; for God is love."

(1 John 4 : 8.)

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

(1 John 4 : 21.)

See also 2 John 5 and 6 ; Rom. 14 : 9 ; and 1 John 3.

Avoid Strife and Division.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be *no divisions among you* ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now, this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul ; and I of Apollos ; and I of Cephas ; and I of Christ. *Is Christ divided ?*" (1 Cor. 1 : 10-13.)

"Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye *go to law one with another*.* Why do ye not rather take wrong ? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded ?" (1 Cor. 6 : 7.)

"For ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men ?" (1 Cor. 3 : 3.)

The same injunction is repeated in Philipians 2 : 2 ; also

* How far the litigation which distinguishes the current history of the Church of England applies to this text the reader may judge for himself.

in 2 Tim. 2 : 14; Rom. 16 : 17; 2 Cor. 13 : 11; and James 3 : 14.

Love Not the World.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man *love the world the love of the Father is not in him.*” (1 John 2 : 15.)

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ : whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, *who mind earthly things.*” (Phil. 3 : 18, 19.)

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colos. 3 : 2.)

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that *the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*” (James 4 : 4.)

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” (Rom. 8 : 5.)

General Precepts.

Chastity.

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.”
(1 Thess. 4 : 3; also Eph. 5; and Heb. 13.)

Fraud.

“That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter : because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.”
(1 Thess. 4 : 6.)

Peaceful Labour.

“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.” (1 Thess. 4 : 11.)

Mourn not for the Dead.

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, *that ye sorrow not,* even as others which have no hope. For if we

believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

(1 Thess. 4 : 13.)

Civil Speech.

"Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

(Colos. 4 : 6.)

Foolish Talk.

"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient : but rather giving of thanks."

(Ephes. 5 : 4.)

Advice to Children.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise)."

(Ephes. ; and Col. 3 : 20.)

Advice to Parents.

"And ye parents, provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

(Ephes. ; and Col. 3 : 21.)

Advice to Servants.

"Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things ; not answering again ; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity ; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

(Titus ; also Ephes. 6 ; 1 Tim. 6 ; Col. 3 : 22 ; 1 Peter 2 : 18.)

Meekness and Forbearance.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love."

(Ephes. 4 : 2 ; and Col. 3.)

Truthfulness.

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour."

(Ephes. 4 : 25.)

Anger.

"Be ye angry, and sin not : let not the sun go down upon

your wrath : let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."

(Eph. ; Col. 3 : 8 ; and Jas. 1 : 19.)

Honest Labour v. Theft.

"Let him that stole steal no more : but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

(Ephes. 4 : 28.)

Bad Language.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

(Ephes. 4 : 29 ; also 1 Pet. 2 : 10 ; Col. 3 : 8 ; and Jas. 1 : 26.)

Kindness and Forgiveness.

"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

(Ephes. 4 : 32 ; Rom. 13 : 10 ; and Col. 3.)

Disorderly Behaviour and Idleness.

"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us ; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you. Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, *but wrought with labour* and travail night and day, *that we might not be chargeable to any of you* : Not because we have not power, but to *make ourselves an ensample unto you* to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that *if any would not work, neither should he eat*. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly working not at all, but are busybodies. Now, them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."

(2 Thess. 3 : 7-12.)

Advice to Wives.

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands ; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives ; while they beheld your chaste conversation

coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel ; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

(1 Peter 3 : 1 ; and Colos. 3 : 18.)

Hospitality.

"Use hospitality one to another without grudging."

(1 Peter 4 : 8 ; also Heb. 13 : 2 ; and Rom. 13 : 13.)

Contentedness.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness ; and be content with such things as ye have."

(Heb. 13 : 5 ; also Gal. 5.)

War.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal."

(2 Cor. 10 : 4.)

Simplicity.

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

(2 Cor. 11 : 3.)

Diligence.

"Not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord."

(Rom. 12 : 11.)

Sympathy.

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

(Rom. 12 : 15.)

Ambition.

"Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate."

(Rom. 12 : 16.)

Conceit.

"Be not wise in your own conceits." (Rom. 12 : 16.)

"In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

(Phil. 2 : 3.)

Curses.

"Bless them which persecute you : bless, and curse not."
(Rom. 12 : 14.)

Return Good for Evil : no Revenge.

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath : for it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
(Rom. 12 : 21 ; also 1 Thess. 5.)

Honesty.

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men."
(Rom. 12 : 17.)

Peacefulness.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."
(Rom. 12 : 18.)
"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, *without which no man shall see the Lord.*"
(Heb. 12 ; also 1 Tim.)

Avoid Bad Company.

"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without ? do not ye judge them that are within ? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."
(1 Cor. 5 : 11-13.)

Selfishness.

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."
(Phil. 2 : 4.)

Advice to Husbands.

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."
(Col. 3 : 19.)

Advice to Masters.

"Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

(Col. 4 : 1.)

Live Soberly.

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

(Titus 2 : 12; and 1 Peter 5.)

Gossiping Women.

"And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers, also busybodies, speaking things when they ought not."

(1 Tim. 5 : 13.)

Marriage Approved.

"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

(1 Tim. 5 : 14.)

The Duties of Women.

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

(Titus. 2 : 3.)

Set a Good Example.

"Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

(1 Tim. 4 : 12.)

Good Thoughts.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think on these things.*"

(Phil. 4 : 8.)

General Exhortations.

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." (1 Thess. 5 : 14.)

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after *righteousness*, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." (1 Tim. 6 : 11.)

The following practical teachings of John the Baptist (Luke 3 : 10), called by Christ "the greatest of the prophets," deserve a place in this collection, inculcating, as they do, almsgiving, honesty, peacefulness, truthfulness, and contentedness:—

"And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

Good Works.

If Christ demanded an active rather than a passive religion, much more did his apostles also require it. The language which is used on this point, though in some places appearing to be contradictory, is in others most pronounced, as the following extracts will show. As the great error of modern Christianity appears to consist in paying too much attention to the doctrines of Christianity—to *faith*, *belief*, and devotional services—and ignoring its practical teachings, which inculcate the necessity of *living the life* of Christ, instead of perpetually dwelling on his *death*, the following explicit declaration of James deserves the utmost prominence.

Faith without Works is insufficient.

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body: what doth it profit? *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*"

Faith is proved by Works.

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will *shew thee my faith by my works.* Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that *faith without works is dead?* Ye see then how that by *works a man is justified, and not by faith only.* For as the body without the spirit is dead, so *faith without works is dead also.*" (James 2: 15-26.)

"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." (1 Cor. 15: 2.)

So also the following by St. Paul:—

Doing versus Hearing.

"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

(Rom. 2: 13.)

"But be ye *doers* of the word, and *not hearers only*, deceiving your own selves: for if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was; but whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being *not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work*, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1: 25.)

Faith without Works is Sin.

"Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.)

Walking in the Light ensures Salvation.

"This then is the message which we have heard of him,

and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth : but if we *walk in the light*, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

(1 John 1 : 7.)

Faith must be Supplemented by Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, &c.

"And beside this, giving all diligence, *add to your faith virtue*; and to virtue *knowledge*; and to knowledge *temperance*; and to temperance *patience*; and to patience *godliness*; and to godliness *brotherly kindness*; and to brotherly kindness *charity*. . . . But *he that lacketh these things is blind*, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure : for *if ye do these things, ye shall never fall* : for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

(2 Peter 1 : 5.)

The Outward Signs of Godliness.

"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth ; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."

(Eph. 5 : 9.)

"Little children, let no man deceive you : he that *doeth* righteous is righteous, even as he is righteous."

(1 John 3 : 7.)

"If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that *doeth* righteousness is born of him."

(1 John 2 : 29.)

Deeds, not Words.

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in *deed* and in truth."

(1 John 3 : 17, 18.)

"Now, therefore, *perform the doing of it* : that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have."

(2 Cor. 8 : 11.)

When good Words are acceptable.

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."
(2 Cor. 8 : 12.)

Eternal Life for those who do God's Will.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that *doeth the will of God* abideth for ever."
(1 John 2 : 17.)

Salvation for Well-doers.

"Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: *but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*"
(Acts 10 : 34, 35.)

"The righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his *deeds*: to them who by patient continuance *in well-doing* seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life. . . . But glory, honour, and peace to every man *that worketh good*, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God."
(Rom. 2 : 6.)

"Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work* out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God *which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*"
Phil. 2 : 13.)

"Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man *doeth*, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."
(Eph. 6 : 8.)

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according *as his work shall be*. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that *do* his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
(Rev. 22 : 13.)

"And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth *according to every man's work*, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."
(1 Peter 1 : 17.)

Suffering for Conscience' Sake.

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward

God endure grief, suffering wrongfully ; for what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God ; for even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”
(1 Peter 2 : 19.)

General Exhortations to Well-doing.

“ Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul ; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles : that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may, *by your good works* which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. For so is the will of God, that with *well-doing* ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men : as free, and not using your liberty for the cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.”
(1 Peter 2 : 11-16.)

“ But ye brethren, be not weary in *well-doing*.”
(2 Thess. 3 : 13.)

“ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; that they *do good*, that they be rich in *good works*, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.”

(1 Tim. 6 : 17.)

“ That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being *fruitful in every good work*, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

(Colos. 1 : 10.)

“ And purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works*.”

(Titus 2 : 15.)

“ As ye have therefore opportunity, *let us do good unto all men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

(Gal. 6 : 10.)

“ Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every *good word and work*.”

(2 Thess. 2 : 17.)

“ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to *good works*.”

(Heb. 10 : 24.)

“ The God of Peace make you perfect in every *good work to do his will*, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”
(Heb. 13 : 20, 21.)

Lastly, in the Revelation of St. John, he was commanded to write an epistle to each of the seven churches of Asia—at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. To Thyatira he is to write—

“These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know *thy works* and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, *and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*” (Rev. 2 : 18.)

To Ephesus he is to write—

“I know *thy works*, and *thy labour*, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil.” (Rev. 2 : 2.)

To Pergamos the same words, “*I know thy works*,” are addressed; likewise to Sardis, Laodicea, and Smyrna.

Salvation to Him that overcometh.

In Revelation, John is directed to write this promise to each of the last named churches. To Ephesus :—

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches : *To him that overcometh* will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev. 2 : 7.)

To Smyrna—

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches : *He that overcometh* shall not be hurt of the second death.” (Rev. 2 : 11.)

To Sardis—

“*He that overcometh*, the same shall be clothed in white raiment : and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” (Rev. 3 : 5.)

To Philadelphia—

“*Him that overcometh* will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.” (Rev. 3 : 12.)

To Laodicea—

“*To him that overcometh* will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 3 : 21.)

To Thyatira—

“And *he that overcometh*, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.”

(Rev. 2 : 26.)

As good works are praised and required, so equally are—

Evil-doers Denounced.

“Let him eschew evil, and *do good*; let him seek peace, and ensue it; for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that *do evil*.”

(1 Peter 3 : 12.)

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever *doeth not righteousness is not of God*, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

(1 John 3 : 14.)

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; *whose end shall be according to their works*.”

(2 Cor. 11 : 14.)

“But he that *doeth wrong* shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”

(Colos. 3 : 25.)

“Now I pray to God that *ye do no evil*; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.”

(2 Cor. 13 : 7.)

“They profess that they know God: but *in works they deny him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

(1 Titus 1 : 16.)

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful *works of darkness*, but rather reprove them.”

(Ephes. 5 : 11.)

“But unto them that are contentious, and do *not obey* the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that *doeth evil*, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.”

(Rom. 2 : 8.)

“And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works*.”

(Rev. 20 : 12.)

What is Pure Religion ?

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
(James 1 : 27.)

Charity Superior to Faith and Almsgiving.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and *though I have all faith*, so that I could remove mountains, *and have not charity*, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. . . . And now abideth *faith*, hope, charity, these three; but *the greatest of these is charity*."
(1 Cor. 13 : 13.)

"And, above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."
(1 Peter 4 : 8.)

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."
(1 Tim. 1 : 5.)

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."
(Col. 3 : 14.)

"Follow after charity."
(1 Cor. 14 : 1.)

Charity Defined.

"Charity suffereth long, and is *kind*; charity *envieth* not; charity *vaunteth* not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."
(1 Cor. 13 : 4.)

Prayer is Enjoined.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and snpplication for all saints."
(Ephes. 6 : 18.)

"Continuing instant in prayer."
(Rom. 12 : 12.)

"Pray without ceasing."
(1 Thess. 5 : 17.)

“Continue in prayer.”

(Colos. 4 : 2.)

“The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

(Jas. 5 : 16.)

Sabbath Observance and Worship.

In Matthew, Luke, and John we find that Christ was accused by the Scribes and Pharisees of breaking the Sabbath-day, both by healing the sick, and walking through the corn-fields and plucking the ears of corn. They are reported to have said of him, “This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath-day.”

St. Paul writes on this subject—

“One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

(Rom. 14 : 5.)

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”

(Acts 17 : 24.)

CHAPTER III.

The Doctrinal Teachings of Christ.

I HAVE now epitomised what I consider may be termed the practical teachings of Christ as distinguished from the orthodox or doctrinal teachings. The latter will now be extracted and classified in the same way as the former, in order that the reader may compare the two and judge to which the most weight should be attached, and whether either may safely be insisted upon without the other.

It is not a little remarkable, by the way, that by far the largest number of these extracts are found in St. John's Gospel, generally admitted to be the least reliable of the four. (See remarks in Introduction, *ante* p. 14.)

The Atonement.

“For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”*

(Matt. 26 : 28.)

“Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

(Matt. 20 : 28.)

* It should be observed here that Christ makes a statement of the purport of his sacrifice, but does not add that *to believe in this* is the one thing needful for salvation. The reader will see how different this is from the Church's teaching, when we come to discuss the Thirty-nine Articles. I would respectfully submit that it is one thing for Christ to give an *explanation* of his mission, and quite another matter to threaten (as the Church does) with eternal damnation all who do not or cannot believe it. Again, whilst St. Paul teaches that Christ atoned by his death for the sin of Adam, and that through Adam's sin all men are born naturally sinful—“the children of wrath”—it is a remarkable fact that *no where does Christ teach any such doctrine.*

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."
(John 10 : 18.)

Christ's power to forgive Sins.

"And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that *the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins* (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house."^{*}

(Luke 5 : 21.)

Repentance and Remission of Sins.

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
(Luke 24 : 47.)

Belief in Christ necessary to Salvation.[†]

"That whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that *believeth not* is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. . . . The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that *believeth on the Son* hath everlasting life: and he

^{*} Luke 21 : 19 and Mark 14 : 24 contain the same, but omit the words "remission of sins," whilst John omits it altogether.

[†] In nearly all these texts, be it observed, we are not told that belief in Christ means believing in Christ's Divinity or his atoning sacrifice. The meaning of the words *belief in Christ* is therefore to be gathered from the spirit of Christ's teachings; and this I have fully enlarged upon in a subsequent section, entitled "Salvation according to Christ." (See Chap. VI.)

that *believeth not on the Son* shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

(John 3 : 15-18, and 35, 36.)

"He that *believeth* and is baptised shall be saved ; but he that *believeth not* shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 16.)*

"If ye *believe not that I am he* ye shall die in your sins."
(John 8 : 24.)

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: *no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"
(John 14 : 6.)

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10 : 9.)

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which *seeth* the Son and *believeth on him* may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."
(John 6 : 40.)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *believeth on me* hath everlasting life."
(John 6 : 47.)

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that *believeth on me* shall never thirst."
(John, and see to same effect 11 : 25, 26.)

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye *believe on him whom he hath sent.*"
(John 6 : 29.)

Believers are Followers of Christ.

"If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye *believe not*, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they *follow me*: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."
(John 10 : 24.)

"He that taketh not his cross and *followeth me* is not worthy of me."
(Matt. 10 : 38.)

* As the reader will see by referring to the Introduction the authenticity of this text is generally discredited. *Ante* p. 7.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: *he that followeth me* shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

(John 8 : 12.)

Belief in Christ means Belief in God.

"Jesus cried and said, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.* And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever *believeth on me* should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. *For I have not spoken of myself: but the Father which sent me,* he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (John 12 : 44.)

"As *thou* hast given *him* power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as *thou* hast given him. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ,** whom *thou* hast sent."

(John 17 : 3.)

Belief in God suffices for Salvation.

"He that heareth my word, and *believeth on him that sent me*, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation."

(John 5 : 24.)

The Resurrection of the Dead.

"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching *the resurrection of the dead*, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God,

* This text and that of John 8 : 24, quoted *ante* p. 60, appear to be the strongest expressions in favour of the doctrine that a belief in Christ's Divine mission is an *indispensable* qualification for salvation, though they do not go so far as asserting that Christ was himself the Almighty incarnate—rather the reverse. Mr. Greg doubts whether Christ ever uttered the words above, since "they form," says he, "a natural expression for the evangelist, but scarcely for his Master."

saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God, *is not the God of the dead*, but of the living." (Matt. 22 : 30-32.)

Everlasting Punishment.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

(Matt. 25 : 31.)

"And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*, but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25 : 46.)

"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom *all things that offend, and them which do iniquity*:† and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 8 : 12.)

"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go *into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched*: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9 : 43.)

Salvation for the Elect.

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together *his elect* from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. 24 : 31, and Mark 13 : 27.)

"I pray for them: *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine*." (John 17 : 9.)

The Lord's Supper.

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and

* The resurrection of the dead and everlasting punishment are not taught as indispensable requisites of belief, without which salvation is unattainable. Contrast these mere statements of fact with Salvation according to the Thirty-nine Articles, as set forth in a subsequent chapter.

† This text also suggests that *evil-doers* are to be punished: not (as the Church says) *unbelievers*. (See *ante* p. 40.)

gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: *this do in remembrance of me*. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

(Luke 22 : 19; also Mark 14 : 24.)

Baptism.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* (Matt. 28 : 18.)

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and *is baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."† (Mark 16 : 16.)

"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, *that Jesus also being baptized*, and praying, the heaven was opened." (Luke 3 : 21.)

Christ's Divinity.

In Matthew Jesus speaks of himself upwards of a dozen times as "the Son of Man;" scarcely once does he call himself the "Son of God," though on about six occasions he was so addressed by others. Addressing others, he several times speaks of God as "Your Father," and in numerous instances alludes to God as "My Father."

In Mark Christ nowhere calls himself the "Son of God," though in upwards of ten instances he styles himself the "Son of Man." In several instances St. Mark and others refer to him as the "Son of God."

In Luke, he is called the "Son of God" several times by others, though he never styles himself so, but frequently the "Son of Man," speaking, however, in a few instances, of God as "my Father."

John tells us, that on several occasions Christ was called

* Mr. Greg (as will be seen, *ante* p. 16) doubts whether Christ ever uttered these words.

† See remarks on this text, *ante* p. 7.

the "Son of God" by others; in a few instances he spoke of himself as the "Son of God," and, in others, alludes to God as "my Father," whilst in many others he also styles himself the "Son of Man."

God a Spirit.

"*God is a Spirit*: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4 : 24.)

The Voice from Heaven.

"And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him."

(Mark; also Matt. 3 : 17; and Luke 10 : 35.)

The Son of God.

"*Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* And Jesus said, *I am* :* and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14 : 61.)

"The high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us *whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God*. Jesus saith unto him, *Thou hast said*: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

(Matt. 26 : 63; also John 11 : 36.)

My God.

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? which is, being interpreted, *My God, my God*, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 27 : 46, and Matt. 15 : 34.)

Christ sent by God.

"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I *proceeded forth and came from God*; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."

(John 8 : 42.)

"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth *him that sent me*."

(Luke 10 : 16.)

* Again, be it observed, Christ makes a statement; but does not (like the Church) threaten those who cannot believe it.

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him *that sent me*, hath everlasting life." (John 5 : 24.)

"He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on *him that sent me*." (John 12 : 44.)

"I have not spoken of myself; but *the Father which sent me*." (John 12 : 49.)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth *him that sent me*."*

(John 13 : 20; also Matt. 10 : 40; Mark 9 : 37; and Luke 9 : 48.)

God in Christ.

"*I and my Father are one*." (John 10 : 30.)

"Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because *I said, I am the Son of God*? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, *that the Father is in me*, and I in him." (John 10 : 36.)

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father*; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and *the Father in me*? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: *but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works*. Believe me that I am in the Father, and *the Father in me*: or else believe me for the very works' sake." (John 14 : 9.)

Christ's Divine Mission.

"And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them

* The passages in John which refer to Christ as sent by God are so numerous that I cannot quote them all. Refer to John 4 : 34; 5 : 23; 12 : 44; 5 : 30; 6 : 38-40; 5 : 36; 6 : 57; 8 : 16; 6 : 44; 7 : 16; 9 : 4; 10 : 36; 11 : 42; 12 : 45; 14 : 24; 15 : 21, &c., &c.

that are bruised, . . . and he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."
(Luke 4 : 18.)

Christ's Power from God.

"*The Son can do nothing of himself*, but what he seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5 : 19.)

"*All things are delivered to me of my Father.*"
(Luke 10 : 22, and Matt. 11 : 27.)

God in the Apostles.

"For it is not ye that speak, but the *Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*" (Matt. 10 : 20.)

The Worship of Christ.

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*"
(Matt. 19 : 17; Mark 10 : 18; and Luke 18 : 19.)

"And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou has sucked. But he said, *Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*" (Luke 11 : 27.)

"That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. *He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*"
(John 5 : 23.)

The Children of God.

"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are *equal unto the angels; and are the children of God*, being the children of the resurrection." (Luke 20 : 36.)

"Adam, which was the son of God." (Luke 3 : 38.)

CHAPTER IV.

The Doctrinal Teachings of the Apostles.

A SLIGHT perusal of the doctrinal teaching of Christ, as set out in the foregoing chapter, will satisfy the reader that the doctrines of modern orthodox Christianity receive but very little countenance from Christ himself. It will be seen from the following more voluminous teachings of the Apostles that the latter are the chief foundation of modern dogma.

General Doctrines of Christ.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of *faith toward God*. Of the *doctrine of baptisms*, and of *laying on of hands*, and of *resurrection of the dead*, and of *eternal judgment*." (Heb. 6 : 2.)

The Atonement.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." (*Per* John the Baptist—John 1 : 29.)

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and *he is the propitiation for our sins*: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2 : 2.)

"In whom we have *redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1 : 7.)

"Much more then, *being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him*." (Rom. 5 : 9.)

"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom we have now received the atonement*." (Rom. 5 : 11.)

- "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were *not redeemed with corruptible things*, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; *but with the precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1 : 19.)
- "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, *when he had by himself purged our sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1 : 3.)
- "Who hath *delivered us from the power of darkness*, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son : in whom we have *redemption through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins." (Colos. 1 : 14.)
- "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so *by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*." (Rom. 5 : 19.)
- "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh : how much more shall *the blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, *purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God*? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for *the redemption of the transgressions* that were under the first testament, *they which are called* might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." (Heb. 9 : 13.)
- "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood ; and *without shedding of blood is no remission*." * (Heb. 9 : 22.)
- "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through *the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10 : 14.)

Salvation by Faith and Belief.

"If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus*, and

* This is one of those texts which seem to justify the most repulsive of the doctrines of modern Christianity. It implies that Christ's death was of more consequence than his life and teachings, and that repentance and a new life do not ensure forgiveness.

shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. . . . For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10 : 9, 13.) *

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

(1 John 4 : 15.)

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16 : 31.)

"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13 : 39.)

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10 : 43.)

"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (1 John 3 : 23.)

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7 : 25.)

No Salvation but through Christ.

"Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4 : 12.)

"He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5 : 12.)

The Divinity of Christ.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

(1 John 4 : 15.)

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (1 John 5 : 11.)

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the

* These two texts are such obvious contradictions to what Christ required from those who seek salvation, that it is unnecessary to do more than point to them as a sufficient justification for rejecting isolated texts as of little value, excepting in the light of other passages of Scripture. Compare them with Matt. 7 : 21, and Luke 6 : 43. (Ante p. 39.)

sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me : for he was before me." (John 1 : 29.)

"Who is *the image of the invisible God*, the firstborn of every creature : for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him : and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church." (Colos. 1 : 15.)

Worship of Christ.

"That *at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Philip 2 : 10.)

Jesus a Man Approved of God.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; *Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God* among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." (Acts 2 : 22.)

Believers are Sons of God.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that *we are the children of God* : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and *joint heirs with Christ* ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8 : 15.)

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John the Baptist—John 1 : 12.)

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that *we should be called the sons of God* : therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, *now are we the sons of God*, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3 : 1.)

"And will be a Father unto you, and *ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*" (2 Cor. 6 : 18.)

The Trinity.

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water and the blood; and these three agree in one.” (1 John 5 : 7, 8.)

Natural Depravity and Original Sin.

“But *the scripture hath concluded all under sin*, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to *them that believe.*” (Gal. 4 : 22.)

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, *for that all have sinned*: for until the law sin was in the world: *but sin is not imputed when there is no law.* Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, *even over them that had not sinned* after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For *if through the offence of one many be dead*, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” (Rom. 5 : 12.)

“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; *and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*” (Ephes. 2 : 3.)

Salvation by Faith, not by Works.

“Knowing that a man *is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ*, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ; and *not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.” (Gal. 2 : 16.)

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be *ready to every good work.* To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. *Not by works of righteousness* which we have done, but according to his mercy *he saved us, by the washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which

he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being *justified by his grace*, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

(Titus 3 : 1.)

"And the *prayer of faith shall save the sick*, and the Lord shall raise him up; and *if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*" (James 5 : 15.)

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: therefore we conclude that a man is *justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*" (Rom. 3 : 24.)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: *not of works*, lest any man should boast." (Ephes. 2 : 8.)

"Now to him that *worketh* is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him that *worketh not but believeth on him* that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. 4 : 4.)

Eternal Punishment.

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, *Vengeance belongeth unto me*, I will recompense saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*" (Heb. 10 : 29.)

"Jesus, in flaming fire *taking vengeance on them* that know not God, and *that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*: who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."* (2 Thess. 1 : 8.)

"And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. . . . And *whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*" (Rev. 20 : 15.)

* The notion of Jesus "taking vengeance" on any one stamps this passage as anything but an inspired one.

“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; *but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.*”

(*Per John the Baptist—Luke 3 : 17.*)

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the *lake of fire and brimstone*, where the beast and the false prophets are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev. 20 : 10.)

The Resurrection.

“Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. . . . In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and *the dead shall be raised incorruptible*, and we shall be changed.” (1 Cor. 15 : 50.)

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. *This is the first resurrection.*” (Rev. 20 : 5.)

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, *by man came also the resurrection of the dead*. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15 : 20.)

“For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there *shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*” (Acts 23 : 8.)

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and *the dead in Christ shall rise first*: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. 4 : 15.)

Baptism.

“He preached the *baptism* of repentance for the remission of sins.”

(John the Baptist—Luke 3 : 3; also Mark 1 : 4.)

"I indeed baptize you *with water* unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I. . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

(John the Baptist—Matt. 3 : 11 ; Luke 3 : 16.)

"Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and *our bodies washed with pure water.*"

(Heb. 10 : 22.)

"For as many of you as have *been baptized into Christ* have put on Christ."

(Gal. 3 : 27.)

Not to Baptize.

"For Christ *sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel* : not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." (1 Cor. 1 : 17.)

The Lord's Supper.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread : and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he *that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself*, not discerning the Lord's body."

(1 Cor. 11 : 23.)

Election and Predestination.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, *to the strangers* scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ : Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

(1 Peter 1 : 1.)

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, *to them who are the called according to his purpose.* For whom he did foreknow, he also did *predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover *whom he did predestinate, them he also called*: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. 8 : 28.)

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” (2 Thess. 2 : 13.)

“According as he hath *chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having *predestinated us into the adoption* of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” (Eph. 1 : 4.)

“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*” (Acts 3 : 39.)

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: *and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*” (Acts 13 : 48; see also Heb. 9 : 15.)

Praise and Prayer.

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” (James 5 : 13.)

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of *praise to God continually*, that is, the fruit of our lips giving *thanks* to his name.” (Heb. 13 : 15.)

The Sons of God.

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.
Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” (1 John 3 : 1, 2; see also Gal. 3 : 26; 4 : 5, 6.)

“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8 : 14.)

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” (John 1 : 12.)

CHAPTER V.

Contradictory and Miscellaneous Extracts.

IN the foregoing chapters the reader will find a tolerably accurate epitome of the various passages in the New Testament upon which the doctrines of modern Christianity rest. We will now point out some passages which seem to teach certain contradictory doctrines and sacraments which modern Christianity has thought fit to exclude from its observances.

The Ceremony of Feet-washing Enjoined.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet ;
*ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have
given you an example, that ye should do as I have done
to you.*" (John 13 : 14.)

Anointing the Head and Fasting.

"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash
thy face." (Matt. 6 : 17.)

Do not Swear by Oaths.

"I say unto you, *Swear not at all.* . . . Let your
communication be, yea, yea ; nay, nay : for whatsoever
is more than these, cometh of evil." (Matt. 5 : 34.)

"But above all things, my brethren, *swear not*, neither by
heaven, neither by the earth, *neither by any other oath* ;
but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye
fall into condemnation." (James 5 : 12.)

Celibacy and Fasting Condemned.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times
some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seduc-
ing spirits, and doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in
hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot
iron ; *forbidding to marry*, and commanding *to abstain*

from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." (1 Tim. 4 : 1.)

Confession.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (James 5 : 16.)

Discrepancies Concerning Christ.

In Hebrews 7th we find Christ described as "a priest after the order of Melchisedec," and in verse 3 occurs the following extraordinary allusion to his origin.

"Without father, *without mother, without descent*, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."

How this statement can be reconciled with the following from Romans 1 : 3, or the pedigrees in Matthew and Luke, it is difficult to see:—

"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."

Let us now compare the pedigree given in Matthew with that contained in Luke. The former commences as follows:—

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, *the son of David*, the son of Abraham."

Here Christ is called the son of David, but it is clearly meant in the sense of a *descendant* of David, seeing that whilst David is called the *son of Abraham* the writer immediately afterwards proceeds to show how David *descended* from Abraham through several generations.

To trace the descent of Jesus from David, Matthew then proceeds to state that "David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; and Solomon begat Roboam," &c. (continuing the descent down to one "Matthan who begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus." On turning to Luke's pedigree, we are told in effect that David begat

Nathan (not Solomon), and Nathan begat Mattatha, &c. (continuing the pedigree through quite a different succession of names to those given by Matthew), down to one Matthat who begat Heli (not Jacob), and Heli was the father of Joseph, the father of Jesus. Of Jesus, Luke speaks as "being (*as was supposed*) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli."

On referring to Matthew 1 : 25, the reader will see that the foregoing statements about Jesus being "of the seed of David" are again contradicted, because Jesus is said to have been "conceived of the Holy Ghost." Since, therefore, it is impossible to reconcile all these contradictory statements, the only rational conclusion is, that either St. Matthew or St. Luke were *wrong*, and therefore *not inspired*.

Flesh Meat and Wine Condemned.

Although Christ attended feasts and drank wine until he was called a "wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," St. Paul, in Romans 14 : 21, says—

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

It is needless to say that modern Christians quietly ignore St. Paul's teachings on this point, as they have the injunction to wash one another's feet, to anoint the head when fasting, and to avoid taking oaths.

When we find, therefore, that stray remarks of St. Paul are seized hold of by various sects, and adopted as vital points of doctrine, in short, are made to all intents and purposes into *laws* binding on the Christian conscience, it is certainly strange that these other passages should be entirely ignored, especially in view of what St. James said—

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

Should Religion be Gloomy ?

On this subject the apostles contradict one another, and differ from Christ's teachings. Jesus said—

“When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, *of a sad countenance*: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” (Matt. 6 : 16.)

Whilst St. Paul says—

“*Rejoice* evermore.” (1 Thess. 5 : 16.)

St. James, on the contrary, writes—

“Be *afflicted*, and *mourn and weep*: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” (James 4 : 9.)

Has Christ Power to Judge ?

“God sent not his Son into the world to *condemn the world*; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3 : 17.)

“If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not, *for I came not to judge the world*, but to save the world.” (John 12 : 48.)

“For the Father judgeth no man, but *hath committed all judgment unto the Son*.” (John 5 : 22 ; see also 5 : 27.)

“*Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died*, yea rather, that is risen again.” (Rom. 8 : 34.)

Does God Tempt Man ?

Whilst in the Lord's Prayer Christ is said to have directed his followers to pray God to

“*Lead us not into temptation*,”

James writes—

“Let no man say when he is tempted I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, *neither tempteth he any man*.” (James 1 : 13.)

Are Men to Hate and Forsake their Families ?

The following extraordinary statements by Christ are so

entirely at variance with the rest of his teachings, as to leave little doubt that Christ never uttered them, and therefore, that the apostles, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, must have reported him wrongly, or they have been wrongly translated :—

“ If any man come to me, and *hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*” (Luke 14 : 26.)

“ So likewise, whosoever he be of you that *forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*” (Luke 14 : 33.)

“ And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, *There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*”

(Mark 10 : 30; Luke 18 : 30; and Matt. 19 : 29.)

Christians and anti-Christians.

“ *For he that is not against us is on our part.*”

(Mark 9 : 40.)

“ *He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.*” (Luke 11 : 23.)

The Date of the Second Coming.

There is abundant evidence in the New Testament to prove either that Christ and his disciples were utterly mistaken regarding the second coming of Christ, or else, that the apostles have strangely misreported what Christ said. How otherwise it is possible to reconcile the following statements with the facts of history, it is difficult to see :—

“ Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which *shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*” (Matt. 16 : 28.)

- “And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which *shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.*” (Mark 9 : 1.)
- “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. . . . Verily I say unto you, *This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.*” (Luke 21 : 27 and 32.)
- “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and *the stars shall fall from heaven*, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”
(Matt. 24 : 29 ; and Mark 13 : 24.)*
- “Verily I say unto you, *that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.*” (Mark 13 : 30.)
- “But *the end of all things is at hand* : be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” (1 Peter 4 : 7.)

Christians can Work Miracles.

- “Verily, verily, I say unto you, *He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto my Father.* And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it.”
(John 14 : 12.)
- “And *these signs shall follow them that believe ;* In my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if *they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, *the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* Amen.” (Mark 16 : 17.)
- “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”
(2 Cor. 12 : 12.)

* See Mr. Greg's remarks on these texts, ante p. 17.

If the foregoing statements are to be taken for what they obviously mean, one might ask, Who are the believers now-a-days? Can Christian ministers show any such "signs" in proof of their faith? Can they drink poison and cure the sick by laying on of hands? That the apostles and the early followers of Christ could, and did, perform these signs and wonders there is little doubt. The question, therefore, requires answering—Where are the signs and wonders that should follow modern believers? The only explanation our divines can give is, that these gifts were withdrawn.

"They were important," says a note in the Annotated New Testament, "as aids to the introduction of a new revelation from God; but there was clearly no necessity for their permanent continuance. As soon as they became matters of authentic history, the record of them took their place among the evidences of the truth of Christianity." This explanation appears to me weak and illogical. There never was a time when such evidences were more required than in the present day, and it cannot be denied that their continuance would help very much to convince materialists that their speculations are unsound. As to the value of the records of these events, in convincing men of their truth, it is idle to deny that they fail entirely to do anything of the kind. To argue that they were withdrawn because the Almighty did not think the gifts any longer necessary, sounds very like gross presumption. It implies a knowledge of the divine will, which the writer gives no credentials for possessing. If, on the contrary, we take the words of Christ, who said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28 : 20), and "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do" (John 14 : 12), it would seem that the gifts may still be found in the world by those who have faith, and seek for them.

The only modern workers of miracles, such as Christ here describes, would appear to be the modern spiritualists.

If we are to believe what we read in Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace's work, "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism,"* there are scarcely any of the Biblical signs and wonders, excepting the raising of the dead, which have not been paralleled in modern times by the mediums in our midst. The Roman Catholics also claim to have miracles, and point to this fact as proof conclusive that they are the true Church. Those who dispute these claims appear to be in this dilemma:—

They must either admit that Christ was mistaken, and was, therefore, not infallible; that his Apostles misreported what he said, and were, therefore, not inspired writers; or, that modern Christians are not believers.

Nothing Impossible to Faith.

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*"

(Matt. 17 : 19; and Luke 17 : 6.)

"For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, *but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.* Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*"

(Mark 11 : 23.)

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. *If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.*"

(John 14 : 13.)

Are there any Christians who believe that the foregoing statements about the power of faith are to be taken as *literally* true?

* London: Harrison, 38 Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, W.C.

Who is to Bear Our Burdens ?

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6 : 2.)

"For every man shall bear his own burden." (Gal. 6 : 5.)

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*" (Gal. 6 : 7.)

The two first of the foregoing passages are evidently contradictory, and the two last seem hardly to agree with the doctrinal teachings of the Apostles, *ante* pp. 67-8. If every man bears his own burden, reaping that which he has sown, how are we to understand the doctrine, that Christ is to relieve men of the fruits of that which they have sown? So far as the will of God is to be read in the book of Nature, we find unmistakeable proof that, as regards the body, and the physiological laws which govern it, no exception exists in *this* world to the rule, that whatsoever a man sows that shall he reap. Nature knows no shifting of burdens, in so far as the *body* is concerned. Whether, therefore, it is different with the *soul*, and whether the foregoing passages are to be taken as applicable to the latter rather than the former, I do not pretend to say, but certainly they are none the less contradictory.

Is All Scripture Inspired ?

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. 3 : 16.)

I would like to ask whether the foregoing passage can be reconciled with the manifest discrepancies and contradictions which the Bible contains, and which have been so ably exposed by such writers as Colenso, Strauss, Greg, Matthew Arnold, and others.

I have quoted a few obvious contradictions, and many more might be added, to show that the apostles are certainly not to be taken as infallible guides to what Christ taught.

The following well-known exaggeration by St. John is worth quoting in this view :—

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that *even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.* Amen.”

(John 21 : 25.)

Again, is it likely that Christ ever uttered the following threat?—

“Whosoever shall say, *Thou fool*, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

(Matt. 5 : 22.)

or that he employed such violent and uncharitable language as this—

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

(Matt. 23 : 33.)

It is hardly necessary to say that if any modern minister of Christ were to use such language, he would be denounced as devoid of the first essentials of a Christian spirit, and to suppose that Christ—whose teachings prove him to have been all love, mercy, charity, and forgiveness—would denounce foolish and ignorant men in this fashion is exceedingly improbable.

Who are to be Saved?

There are many passages in the New Testament which seem to point to a much wider extension of the Christian scheme of salvation than that which modern believers incline to. We have seen that there are some passages in the doctrinal teachings of Christ, as well as in those of his apostles, which support the notion that only a favoured few, even amongst those to whom Christianity has been preached, will be saved, and this in accordance with God's predestination. In short, they believe that the Almighty has actually created and predestined certain of mankind to be eternally punished, without any chance of escape! Others, again, believe that salvation is for all who believe, as preached by St. Paul; but when one comes to inquire what is to become of those who do not believe, and have

never had any chance of believing, simply because Christianity has never reached them, we are met with a difficulty, which the orthodox Christian usually evades, by referring the inquirer to an obscure passage of St. Paul, where we are told that they are "a law unto themselves." Rom. 2 : 16. What this means no one seems to know, and few pause to draw the logical deductions from such an exception to the Christian scheme of salvation.

If God be a merciful God, it is quite clear he would not punish for their non-belief those who have had *no chance* of believing; and if there is to be a special plan for their salvation, how is it that it has not been brought to their knowledge by Him to whom nothing is impossible? If, on the other hand, they are to be saved in the same sense that Christians will receive salvation, then the necessity or special advantage of being a Christian is not very obvious. Let us see what passages are to be found in the New Testament which can throw light on these questions.

Is there Salvation without Christ ?

In the first place, there are numerous passages which point to the conclusion that, excepting through a belief in Christ, none can be saved. If the reader will turn back to the doctrinal teachings of Christ, *ante* pp. 59, 60, and the doctrinal teachings of his Apostles, *ante* p. 69, he will see that *belief in Christ is necessary to salvation*, and that in the Acts and St. John's Epistle it is distinctly asserted that there is *no salvation, except through faith in Christ*.

St. Paul, in Eph. 2 : 11, seems to imply that those who are without Christ are *without hope and without God*.

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh. . . . That at that time *ye were without Christ*, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, *having no hope, and without God in the world.*"

This is further confirmed by the following passage, which

clearly implies that our salvation depends entirely upon the fact of Christ's resurrection :—

"And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (1 Cor. 15 : 17.)"*

The following passages seem, however, to go farther than the above, since they imply that all who lived before Christ's time lived under the law, and that under the law there could be no righteousness, and therefore no salvation :—

"Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid : for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Gal. 3 : 21.)

"Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed." (Gal. 3 : 23.)

Is God Merciful?

God is, however, a God of mercy, notwithstanding all the passages in Scripture which paint Him in other colours.

Now, although St. Paul tells us (Gal. 1 : 12) that what he teaches he has received "by the revelation of Jesus Christ," one could hardly have better proof that he was *not inspired*, and that his utterances are by no means to be taken as infallible expositions of the Divine will, than the following repulsive conception of the will and intentions of the Almighty in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, 2 : 11 :—

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

* Here, be it observed, St. Paul does not say that salvation depends on our belief in Christ's resurrection, but merely on the fact of Christ's resurrection. It is none the less a fact whether mankind believes it or not.

Again, does any Christian believe that a charitable human being, much less a merciful God, could inspire such a passage as the following :—

“For we are unto God *a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish*”?

(2 Cor. 2 : 15.)

For Christians to boast that they are a “sweet savour” unto God because they are saved, seems scarcely consistent with that humility and loving charity to others which Christ inculcated.

The following extracts tell a very different story, and we may safely accept them as much more worthy of credence than the foregoing, if it were only that they accord with the instincts which God has implanted in us, touching our behaviour towards those who have “trespassed against us”:—

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: *I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*” (Heb. 8 : 10 ; and 10 : 16.)

“Ye shall be the children of the Highest : *for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*” (Luke 6 : 35.)

“Whosoever shall speak a word *against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him*; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.”
(Luke 12 : 10.)

“Verily I say unto you, *All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme*: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” (Mark 4 : 28.)

Salvation for All.

“*And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*”

(Luke 3 : 6.*)

* Per St. John the Baptist, of whom Christ said, “*There is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.*”

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation *hath appeared to all men.*" (Titus 2 : 12.)

"God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2 : 4.)

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, and which *was preached to every creature which is under heaven*; whereof I Paul am made a minister." (Colos. 1 : 23.)

"Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but *in every nation* he that feareth him and *worketh righteousness*, is accepted with him." (Acts 10 : 35.)

"But glory, honour, and peace *to every man that worketh good*, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." (Rom. 2 : 10, 11.)

"Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, *of the Gentiles also.*" (Rom. 3 : 29.)

"Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*" (Acts 11 : 17.)*

If the statement in Col. 1 : 23, that the gospel was "*preached to every creature which is under heaven*," is to be taken literally, it is, of course, untrue. If it is to be taken in the sense that the gospel was *intended for and addressed to* every creature under heaven, of course it proves that *salvation is intended by the Almighty to extend to all and not to a select few who call themselves "the Elect."* If this be so, and I think the foregoing extracts sufficiently support it, the question arises—How is justice to be done to those who have never heard of Christ, and whom Christianity has not reached? Are they to be judged in the same spirit as those who have heard the gospel and rejected it,

* See also *ante* p. 52, and also p. 39, for other texts more or less to the same purport.

whether through inability to accept its teachings or through sinfulness? If faith alone can ensure our salvation, it would be well to ask the question—

What is Faith?

“Now faith is *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Heb. 11 : 1.)

St. Paul then proceeds to show that

Faith is Indispensable.

“But *without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” (Heb. 11 : 6.)

But Faith comes by Hearing.

“So then *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” (Rom. 10 : 17.)

Paul here, in effect, declares that it is necessary that those who are to believe must first have had the gospel preached to them, and as it is so entirely in accordance with all human instincts to suppose that a merciful God would not punish those who have never heard His Truth, *we may safely reject all texts of Scripture as uninspired, and therefore unworthy of belief, that contradict the other passages which support the side of mercy and justice.* Paul himself expresses this more clearly still in the following passage:—

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and *how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10 : 14.)

In his Epistle to the Philippians 2 : 12 he says—

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is *God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*”

If this be so, is it likely that a God of love and mercy

would punish those to whom he has not come,* and whom he does not prompt "to do his good pleasure," simply because they have not been fortunate enough to be born in a Christian country !

St. Paul himself was a living instance to the contrary, as witness the following passage in his 1st Epistle to Timothy :—

Sinning Ignorantly.

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; *who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus *came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*"

(1 Tim. 1 : 12.)

If Christ and Stephen (Acts 7 : 59) could pray for the forgiveness of those who murdered them, surely all Christians must admit that the Almighty would also be quite as merciful to those who, through no fault of their own, have failed to find justification by faith. This very ground of ignorance, which St. Paul alleges as the excuse which sufficed him, is also the same which Christ used in his plea for those who murdered him.

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; *for they know not what they do.*"

(Luke 23 : 34.)

Sinning Wilfully and Knowingly.

"For if we sin wilfully *after that we have received the knowledge of the truth*, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearful-looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

(Heb. 9 : 26.)

* I am here assuming, for the sake of argument, the possibility of God dwelling in some men, and not in others. I have in a later chapter expressed my belief that God dwells in *all* his creatures.

"And as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."
(Rom. 2 : 12.)

The Law for the Heathen.

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, *having not the law, are a law unto themselves* : which shew the work of the law *written in their hearts, their conscience* also bearing witness, and their *thoughts* the meanwhile *accusing or else excusing* one another ; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

(Rom. 2 : 14.)

"*For where no law is, there is no transgression.*"

(Rom. 4 : 15.)

"Sin is not imputed when there is no law."

(Rom. 5 : 13.)

The above passages, taken by themselves, would seem to mean that those without the pale of the gospel will be judged according to their capacities for knowledge of right and wrong, their consciences—i.e., *the inner man*,* being the test of their moral worth. If we consider for a moment how this interpretation applies to society in the present day, we shall soon see how just and reasonable it is. The most narrow and orthodox of Protestants or Catholics cannot but be aware that, in so-called heathen nations—the Chinese or Hindoos for instance—there are numbers of "good men and true" who earnestly seek after truth, and act up to their highest instincts of duty and justice. Many of these lead far more Christian lives perhaps than many so-called religious people amongst ourselves, who outwardly are most strict in their observance of the laws of God, and yet, within, may be actuated by the basest of motives, and be filled with envy, hatred, and uncharitableness. No true Christian presumes to say that the former of such men will be doomed to eternal torments. If the question presents itself to him at all, he will generally

* As the reader will see presently this is precisely the test of moral worth, which, I contend, Christ intends to apply to *all* Christians, and the *only* test.

be prepared to admit that the thoughts, motives, and aspirations of the man will be the true test of his chances of salvation rather than the outward observance of the Ten Commandments. Indeed, nothing seems more certain than that mere compliance with the commandments of God or the laws of man cannot suffice to make a man a true Christian, whether we believe in faith as superior to works—and the one thing needful—or whether we hold the contrary opinion. All will be prepared to admit—whether they be free-thinkers or believers—that such a test of a man's worth is valueless, since it would merely open the door for the admission of the most accomplished hypocrites. Outward observances, and good works, *may* sometimes be evidence of a man's faith, but, in other cases, they may prove nothing of the kind. Their value depends of course entirely upon the *inner motives* by which he is actuated.

In this sense one can agree with the following passages, but in no other :—

“ For if they *which are of the law be heirs*, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.”

(Rom. 4 : 14.)

“ For by the *works of the law* shall no flesh be justified.”

(Gal. 2 : 16.)

“ *For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*”

(Gal. 2 : 21.)

“ But that no man is *justified by the law* in the sight of God, it is evident : for the just shall live by *faith*.”

(Gal. 3 : 11.)

By this, St. Paul, doubtless, wished his hearers to understand that those who observed the laws of Moses could not be saved except they became believers in Christ. In a modern sense it is taken by our religious teachers as signifying that those who lead just lives, but are *not* believers in the orthodox Christian creed, cannot be heirs of salvation along with true believers; otherwise the hope of a special salvation for the latter is a delusion. In this sense it is, of course, merely a repetition of the doctrines previously

advanced by the Apostles (see *ante* pp. 69 and 71), that faith is a *sine qua non* to salvation.

The Law for the Honest Doubter.

I have already discussed the injustice which such a conclusion as the foregoing involves when applied to those who have never heard of Christ. There are, however, thousands of able and good men in our own country, who are not believers, and who cannot accept the orthodox doctrines of Christianity, simply because they do not appeal to the sense of truth and justice with which God has endowed them. Are they then to be held responsible for this attitude of mind? Will God punish them with eternal torments for not being able to believe something which seems to them ambiguous or contrary to reason and justice? If belief were a voluntary act of the mind, it would, of course, be reasonable to expect a man to be punished for his wilful disobedience in not accepting the statements of the Bible; but, since some minds are so constituted—*i. e., are so endowed by the Creator*—that they are unable to accept statements of fact upon insufficient proof, still less, doctrines which strike them as contrary to their highest sense of justice—how is it possible to conceive that a merciful Father would condemn such persons to eternal torments for that which they are unable to avoid, and are, therefore, not responsible? St. Paul tells us to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good;” and sincere seekers after truth may rest quite satisfied that a merciful God, who, we are told, is “*the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*,” will not punish them for rejecting doctrines that they cannot comprehend. A man may fairly be held responsible for the use he makes of the faculties with which nature has endowed him, but surely no one on earth—still less any Superior Being—would punish him *for not having been better endowed!* If there is one human deficiency, more than another, for which allowance should be made, it is

surely the want of intelligence. A stupid man is a great trouble to those who come in contact with him ; but if he does his best, it is surely unreasonable to blame him. We have heard of brutal schoolmasters who chastise some of their pupils for not being as bright as others. Those who presume to say that God will punish with eternal torments some of the brightest intellects of earth, because they strove to find truth in the tenets of orthodox Christianity and failed, would thereby seem to degrade the Almighty to the level of a petty earthly tyrant!

Supposing, for the sake of argument, that the creed of orthodox Christianity is absolutely true; then the man who is unable to see its truth—though he has striven conscientiously to do so—is in precisely the same position as the stupid school-boy who has done his best and failed. It is the lazy pupil who could have done better, if he had chosen to exert himself more, that is usually considered deserving of punishment. Those, however, who go so far as to say that natural endowments are the *gift of God*, would prove that the mental deficiencies of the conscientious seeker after truth entitle him to still more consideration, and render it absolutely inconceivable that such a man could be “deserving of God’s wrath.”

If the Scriptures were inspired—as thousands of sincere Christians honestly believe—instead of finding inconsistencies and contradictions, which are the sure signs of fallible human handiwork, we should find everything clear, beautiful, and true; for we are told in John 20 : 31, that the purport of the Gospels being written is, “that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name.” If the Gospels *were* inspired by the Almighty and yet fail to carry conviction to the minds of sincere seekers after the truth, the inference would be, that God had failed in his purpose! The inevitable conclusion seems therefore to be, we must accept that which appeals to our highest sense of right—

the voice of conscience within us ; and that by "holding fast to that which is good," and living the best life we can, according to our lights, we need fear no Divine wrath or eternal punishment for passing by that which we cannot comprehend.

Judging of the questions discussed in the present chapter, upon the evidence before us, it seems to me that we cannot do better than sum up the foregoing conclusions as follows:—

1. That there is no special salvation for a few only;
and,
2. That those who have not heard of Christ cannot be destined to be punished for their ignorance.
3. That such persons will be judged according to their capacities and inner motives.
4. That even those who *have* heard the Gospel of Christ and cannot conscientiously believe, are not destined to eternal punishment.

CHAPTER VI.

The True Christianity of Christ.

I PROPOSE in this chapter shortly to review the whole of the teachings of Christ and his apostles as contained in the extracts given in the foregoing chapters ; after which, I will endeavour to discover from them what may fairly be considered to be the true and what the false teachings. In support of what I venture to think are the true teachings of Christ I will then give some further extracts from the New Testament, which seem to me to explain much that appears contradictory in other passages.

Salvation according to Christ.

As the prime object of the Gospels, and the Christian religion generally, is supposed to be to ensure our salvation from a life of eternal punishment hereafter, prepared for those who do not live rightly here, let us commence by summing up what Christ really does require of us *as absolutely and indispensably necessary to salvation.*

In Chapter I., *ante* (*The Practical Teachings of Christ*), we find that Christ distinctly stated the qualifications for salvation to be

Keeping His Commandments, viz. :—

Istly, Those against murder, adultery, stealing, defrauding, and bearing false witness, and those requiring us to honour our parents and love our neighbours as ourselves (*ante* p. 32).

H

2ndly, Love of God and love of neighbour (*ante* p. 32).

3rdly, Love of one another (*ante* p. 33).

Christ distinctly requires us to do good and not merely worship God ; and

4thly, In describing the Day of Judgment in Matthew, he promises eternal life to all who have fed the hungry and thirsty, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and in prison ; in short, *beneficence* is made the test of merit. Those who have *failed to do these things* (not failed to believe any particular doctrine), together with "*them which do iniquity*," are alone relegated to eternal punishment (*ante* p. 40).

5thly, The same chapter also contains numerous injunctions by Christ to do and not to do certain things, which, although not distinctly stated to be *necessary to salvation*, may certainly be taken as practical illustrations of the previously named commandments—the love of one another and the love of our neighbours. In this sense, therefore, they *are* necessary to salvation. They may be enumerated as follows:—

To be Cultivated :

Non-resistance ; love of enemies ; almsgiving ; humility ; forgiveness ; mercy ; unselfishness ; self-denial ; righteousness ; martyrdom ; faith in God's providing ; prayer ; doing good ; and finally, behaving towards others as we would they should do to us (*ante* pp. 34-39),

To be Avoided :

Worldly cares ; covetousness ; hypocrisy ; self-glorification and ambition ; judging and condemning others ; surfeiting and drunkenness (*ante* p. 34-39).

On turning to Chapter III., *ante* (*The Doctrinal Teachings of Christ*), in order to see what *doctrines* Christ requires us to believe if we wish to inherit eternal life, we

find one passage in Mark,* and eight or nine in John (*but not one in Matthew and Luke*), which emphatically require, as necessary to salvation—

6thly. Belief in Christ and belief in God (*ante* pp. 59-61).

It is true, it cannot be denied that Christ teaches certain other doctrines in passages from the Gospels, which I have, in Chapter III., divided under the following heads, viz. :—

The atonement; Christ's power to forgive sins; repentance and remission of sins; the resurrection of the dead; everlasting punishment; salvation for the elect; the Lord's Supper; baptism; and Christ's divinity (*ante* p. 58, *et seq.*).

But, strange to say, *no where does he require any belief in these doctrines or sacraments as necessary to salvation!* † Again and again does St. John tell us (and St. Mark only once) that Christ required, as an indispensable requisite to salvation, that we should *believe in him*, but no where does he say that belief in Christ is to mean belief in his divinity, ‡ or his atonement, or in original sin, everlasting

* The passage which is admitted to be unauthentic.

† Since expressing the above conclusions, I am pleased to find the following passage in Mr. J. S. Mill's Essay on "The Utility of Religion," which corroborates my view:—"It may be doubted," says he, "whether Christianity is really responsible for atonement and redemption, original sin and vicarious punishment: and the same may be said respecting the doctrine which makes belief in the divine mission of Christ a necessary condition of salvation. It is nowhere represented that Christ himself made this statement, except in a huddled-up account of the Resurrection contained in the concluding verses of St. Mark, which some critics (I believe the best) consider to be an interpolation." I have also searched Bishop Burnet's "Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles" in vain for any words of Jesus relied on by him to prove that it is necessary to believe in Christ's divinity or atonement in order that we may be saved.

‡ I have quoted two texts in a note (*ante* p. 61) from John 17 : 3 and 8 : 24, which rather favour the opposite view; but as no similar expressions occur in the other Gospels, and as they are also much in the minority even in John, besides—as I have elsewhere endeavoured to show—being so contrary to reason and mercy, I do not think we need hesitate to dispute the Church's interpretation of Christ's meaning.

punishment, or any other of the dogmas of modern theology! Indeed, we are not even left entirely in doubt about the meaning of the words, *belief in Christ*; for Christ himself distinctly tells us that his sheep are they which not only hear his voice, but also *follow him* (*ante* p. 60).

“*Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*”

“He that *followeth me* shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

“He that taketh not his cross and *followeth me* is not worthy of me.”

See also the important texts quoted, *ante* p. 33, chiefly from John, to the effect that *those who love Christ keep his commandments*. What better proof that *belief in Christ* is not intended to mean mere worship or passive faith in Christ can we have, than the important quotations from Matthew, Mark, and Luke (*ante* p. 66), where Christ rebukes the woman who praises him, and tells her—

“Yea, rather, blessed are they that *hear the word of God, and keep it.*”

Or the quotation under the head of *Good Works* (*ante* p. 39), where he says:—

“*Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6 : 46.)

Or this:—

“Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*” (Matt. 7 : 21.)

Now, the *will of the Father* cannot be different from the *will of Christ*, and is undoubtedly contained in the commandments and teachings of Jesus which I have just epitomised under the five heads on *ante* p. 98; since Christ tells us also (see *ante* p. 61):—

“He that *believeth on me, believeth not on me but on him that sent me.*”

“For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which

sent me, *he gave me a commandment what I should say.*"

The only rational conclusion which, it seems to me, can be drawn from a general view of the foregoing teachings of Christ, is—

That he requires of us no belief in any particular doctrine, but *belief in himself; and this belief in himself, we are distinctly told, means obedience to his commandments and teachings.* Section 6th, therefore, of the foregoing summary, is, I contend, comprised under the previous five heads, and those who comply with the latter injunctions are *believers in Christ* within the meaning of the New Testament, and necessarily comply with the former injunctions also.

What stronger and more convincing proof that the teachings of Christ are of a *practical* nature, and lend no countenance to the abstruse dogmas which modern Christians love to quarrel about, can we possibly have than the picture, which I have already twice alluded to, of Christ's second coming, as given in Matthew 25. The whole human race is there divided into *two distinct classes*:—Those who *have* done good to the poor, and those who have *not* done good to the poor. The former—who are called *the righteous*—are to inherit eternal life, and the latter are to inherit everlasting punishment! *Not a word about faith, or the belief in any doctrines whatever.* The only test of righteousness which is hinted at is that of *beneficence.*

I think I may, therefore, supplement the conclusions on p. 96 *ante*, by the following further proposition:—

That salvation according to Christ does not necessitate belief in any particular doctrines taught by Christ, but rather obedience to his commandments.

Salvation according to the Apostles.

Having shown that Christ requires of those who are to be saved, that they should be workers, not believers only, let us see what the Apostles have to say on the same subject.

As in the case of salvation according to Christ, I will epitomise those teachings of the Apostles which are said to be *indispensably necessary to salvation* :—

Practical.

- 1st. Obeying Christ's commandments (*ante* p. 41).
- 2nd. Loving one another (p. 42).
- 3rd. Loving not the world (p. 43).
- 4th. Being peaceful (p. 47).
- 5th. Being a doer of good, not a believer or hearer only (p. 50 and p. 52).
- 6th. Walking in the light (p. 50).
- 7th. Supplementing faith with virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity (p. 51).
- 8th. Doing the will of God (p. 52).
- 9th. Salvation for him that overcometh (p. 54).

Doctrinal.

- 10th. Calling upon the name of the Lord, and confessing Jesus to be the Son of God (p. 69).
- 11th. Believing on Christ (p. 69).
- 12th. By faith without works (p. 71).
- 13th. Obeying the gospel of Christ (p. 72).

Here we have thirteen distinct *promises of salvation* to those who comply with any of the commands under these thirteen heads. In addition to these, the teachings of the Apostles on subjects which are not stated to be of *vital*

importance, are very much more voluminous than those of Christ.

Before reverting to them, let us deduce from these thirteen heads some general statement of the grounds of salvation enunciated by the Apostles. The first eight heads would seem to endorse, in the main, the teachings of Christ, and support the conclusions already arrived at, *ante* p. 101. No. 9—Salvation for him that overcometh—seems to be rather vague. If it means, to him who overcometh temptation to evil, of course it practically means to him who leads a good life or (as section 6 expresses it) “walks in the light.”

In regard to sections 10 and 11, “Calling upon the name of the Lord” and “Believing in Christ,” or “Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God,”—these three may be classed under one head—namely, *Belief in Christ*, which I have already discussed in reference to the same expression as used by Christ in Mark and John, where I have concluded, and I think *proved*, that Christ means *believers* in him to be *doers* of good. I do not think, therefore, that any more powerful blow could be aimed at the complicated and unwieldy structure which modern Christianity has erected on the flimsy foundation of a few stray passages in the Apostles’ writings, than can be administered by quoting the words of Christ himself in the description of his second coming in Matthew 25 (see *ante* p. 40).

To suppose that “*Calling on the name of the Lord*”—as Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans (10 : 13)—will ensure salvation, is evidently an exaggeration which it is scarcely worth while to refute, since Christ has himself said :

“Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; *but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven ;*”

“Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

which brings us back once more to the necessity of obeying Christ’s commandments.

In reference to section 13, *Obedying the Gospel of Christ*, the obvious meaning would seem to be, *obeying the commandments of Christ*; and this is an injunction which I have already discussed under the head of *Believing on Christ*. The last question, therefore, which remains for discussion, and certainly a very weighty one, is that involved under section 12—namely, the value of *Faith without Works*, as a means of salvation. It cannot be denied that again and again does the Apostle Paul, in his Epistles to the Galatians, to Titus, to the Romans, and the Ephesians, insist on the superior merits of *faith* as opposed to *works* (see *ante* pp. 68 and 71). Strange to say, however, not one of the Apostles, *excepting Paul*, enunciates the same proposition; whilst St. James (*ante* p. pp. 50-52), in the most emphatic manner, declares the contrary—namely, that *faith without works is dead*, and asks—

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?”

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

This direct contradiction between two apostles of equal authority is at least sufficient to prove that one of them must be mistaken, and could not therefore have been inspired. The question is—Whom are we to believe? St. Paul, however, also contradicts himself, since in another passage he says—

“For not the *hearers* of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified.”

So also in many other passages—*vide* the extracts on pp. 51, 52, under *Faith supplemented by Virtue*, and *Salvation for Well-doers*, where St. Paul and St. Peter teach the value of works and say nothing of faith. In any case—supposing, too, that St. James may be wrong also—it is clear that Christ cannot be so; and as I have already shown (conclusively I hope) that the dogma of *Faith without Works* meets with the most unqualified discouragement from the Saviour himself, I submit, as a further conclusion—

That Faith without Works cannot be considered as proved to be sufficient for Salvation, or taught as such in the New Testament.

As Christ's teachings contained numerous moral precepts, which I have summarised on *ante* p. 98, as being in the nature of practical illustrations of his commandments, so, too, are we indebted to the apostles for an extensive collection of moral lessons having a practical bearing on everyday life. They may be summarised as follows:—

To live as Christ lived; to love one another; to avoid strife and division; to love not the world; and to cultivate charity.

Then come a series of general precepts touching the following subjects:—

Chastity; fraud; peaceful labour; mourning for the dead; civil speech; foolish talk; advice to children, parents, masters, servants, husbands, and wives; meekness and forbearance; truthfulness; anger; honest labour *versus* theft; bad language; kindness and forgiveness; disorderly behaviour and idleness; hospitality; contentedness; war; simplicity; diligence; sympathy; ambition; conceit; cursing; returning good for evil; honesty; bad company; selfishness; sobriety; gossiping; marriage; good example; good thoughts; the outward signs of godliness; doing *versus* hearing; martyrdom; Sabbath observance; and lastly, general exhortations to well-doing.

It is impossible to glance over the long list of subjects which the Apostles treat of in their epistles and in their speeches, as also those of Christ under sec. 5, *ante* p. 98, without being struck with the extremely *practical* nature of the teachings both of Christ and his Apostles. How earnestly does Christ insist on well-doing, and how minutely do his Apostles illustrate the commandments to "love one another; to "do unto others as ye would they should

do unto you;" and to "love your neighbour," by practical exhortations applicable to the daily life of their hearers. What an awakened interest might not modern preachers create in the breasts of their drowsy listeners if they would select texts like these for their discourses, and endeavour to bring religion home to mankind as a practical rule for guidance in every-day life, instead of, as at present, perpetually dwelling on obscure points of doctrine about which scarcely any one is agreed, and which, on the authority of Christ himself, are of not the least importance to our salvation. Verily, one might say to such preachers—Men ask for bread and ye give them a stone!

I stated on *ante* p. 97, it could not be denied that Christ *did* teach certain doctrines, some of which undoubtedly would seem at first glance to justify the dogmas and sacraments of modern theology—such, for instance, as the Atonement, Christ's Divinity, the Lord's Supper, &c. These statements are reported to have been made by Christ, and they are also again and again repeated, and, I think, *exaggerated*, by the Apostles; but as I have already pointed out, and cannot too often repeat, *Christ nowhere requires us to believe the truth of these doctrines* as a necessary condition to salvation. Modern theology—as we shall see presently—*does* insist upon belief in these doctrines as necessary to salvation, and herein lies the weakness of its position.

The doctrinal questions touched on by the Apostles may be summed up under the following heads, *ante* pp. 67-75:—

The atonement; salvation by faith; the divinity of Christ; the Trinity; natural depravity and original sin; salvation by faith rather than works; eternal punishment; the resurrection; baptism; the Lord's Supper; election and predestination; and praise and prayer.

CHAPTER VII.

Conclusions from the Foregoing.

THE general conclusion which, at first glance, seems inevitable from the foregoing summaries of *Salvation according to Christ, and Salvation according to the Apostles*, would seem to be that

Beneficence is the great desideratum in those who wish to be saved.

When, however, we come to analyse the meaning of the great commandments of Christ, in the light of their practical application, we shall find that it includes much more than we usually understand by the word *beneficence*. It would seem that

There must be *benevolence* also.

If faith without works is dead, certainly it is equally true that works without *benevolence* can avail a man nothing.

It requires, indeed, very little experience of the world to see that mere deeds of charity could not possibly be meant by Christ to suffice as a test of a man's qualifications for entrance into heaven, since every one knows that the greatest hypocrites are they who cultivate a reputation for piety by ostentatious *beneficence*. In short, this brings us to the true test, namely, the *inner motives*, which actuate men in the performance of good works. If the motive is a selfish one—for instance, a desire to stand well with the world by seeing one's name in the newspapers, or being otherwise applauded—it is obvious that the good deeds of such a man are no proof of his *benevolence*. He may delude his fellow-men, but he cannot deceive the Searcher of all hearts.

In glancing back once more at the summary under *Salvation according to Christ* (p. 98), we are bound to conclude, that however valuable the expressions of Christ—alluded to under heading No. 4—may be as an answer to St. Paul's teachings (contradicted by James), that *faith without works* is sufficient to ensure salvation, it is impossible to deny that the statement, which Christ seems there to make,—that works alone will suffice—cannot be taken by itself as an infallible guide in life. Either Christ is misreported, or the words were not intended to be taken literally. We find ourselves obliged, therefore, to class the various utterances of Christ on the subject of salvation together and regard them as a whole; in short, we are compelled to exercise our reason in interpreting the passage. Even the most orthodox Christians claim the privilege of doing this when passages are presented to them which seem contradictory or absurd. When the heterodox claim the same privilege they cannot, therefore, be blamed for so doing.

Taking the summary of Christ's commands as a whole, we find, therefore, that the duties of a Christian may be summed up under two heads:—

1stly. To love God; and,

2ndly. To love mankind.

Love of God necessarily implies a *belief* in God, and faith, as St. Paul says (in Romans 10 : 14)—

“Cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

“How then shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?”

I therefore contend that what the Apostles teach in regard to having *faith* in God is included in the command *to love God*.

In regard to the first of the foregoing heads—Love to God—it is impossible to believe that the Bible is the only means by which men can come to a belief in God; otherwise we should find all so-called heathen nations without any belief in a Supreme Being; whereas we find, on the

contrary, that almost every nation on the earth (whether they have heard of our Bible or not) have some such belief. Those who believe in God must, it seems to me, either *love* or *fear* Him. It is impossible to conceive of indifference in the minds of those who *believe* in the Creator. Those who believe that the scriptural accounts of "God's wrath" and "God's vengeance" are to be taken as reliable—see the extracts under "*Eternal Punishment*," *ante* p. 72, and under "*Is God Merciful*," p. 87—must be much more inclined to *fear* God than to *love* Him. I have, however, endeavoured to counteract the effect of these false notions of God, by quotations which show that mercy is much more likely to be the characteristic of the Almighty than vengeance. Indeed when one considers how merciful and forgiving Christ himself was—forgiving his murderers even in his death agony (as did even his follower, Stephen, also)—it seems little less than blasphemous, as it certainly is a contradiction in terms, to picture the Father as an angry and revengeful God, and, in the same breath, to say that the Saviour and the Father are one (*ante* p. 65), and that the Father dwelleth in Christ! Since Christ enjoins—1st, Love of God as necessary to salvation, we are bound to conclude that those who do not believe in and therefore do not love God—in other words, *atheists*—can hardly be said to come under Christ's definition of those who are to be saved, as expressed in the New Testament.

Having, however, already discussed the *Law for the Heathen* (*ante* p. 92), and the *Law for the Honest Doubter* (*ante* p. 94), and shown how impossible it is to conceive that a merciful God would punish men—sincere and good in other respects—for not being able to believe in the orthodox scheme of salvation, I am bound also to go further, and even dissent from the proposition that those who do not believe in God will be *eternally lost*. So long as the penalty of eternal punishment is appended to the non-belief in the Deity—as the alternative of *salvation*,—it

seems to me either that we must disbelieve in the accuracy of a record which declares that a merciful Creator will thus wreak vengeance on those who are honestly unable to believe in God as described in the Bible; or else we must interpret the word salvation in a very different sense to that which is usually put upon it. Consistently with mercy and justice, the awful penalty of *eternal punishment* seems inconceivable as the consequence of an involuntary act of the mind, like belief or disbelief: in short, belief in God cannot be *necessary to salvation* as the Gospels interpret the word salvation.

It will thus be seen that the question depends upon the meaning we attach to the word "salvation." If it means as the Church teaches—eternal happiness as opposed to eternal damnation—to make a belief in God one of the requirements of salvation, seems to impugn the justice and mercy of the Creator, for the very same reasons that are advanced on pp. 92 and 94 *ante*; and must be rejected. If, however, we find that we can place another interpretation on "salvation," as I have endeavoured to do further on, the matter becomes at once more simple; and it is not impossible to understand how the love of God may, in a sense, be necessary to salvation.

I question, however, whether any man absolutely disbelieves in the existence of God in some form or other; though he may not do so in the God of the Bible. All atheists believe in the laws of nature, because they have ocular demonstration of them, and, since the laws of nature are undoubtedly the laws of God, they in reality *do* believe in the operation of God's laws, only under another name. Whether they will or will not be *punished* hereafter for not believing more, it is impossible for any human being to say; but of one thing we *are* certain, namely, that *in so far as prayer to God is a blessing to those who practice and believe in it, to that extent do atheists suffer for their unbelief*. No thorough atheist can possibly derive any advan-

tage from prayer; because, if he prays at all, he must pray to some invisible Being, and whether he calls that Being his God, or by any other name seeks His aid, it is clear he cannot be a disbeliever in the Almighty so long as he prays to Him. As all who have experienced the advantage of prayer in cases of trouble or distress must admit, the loss of such an aid and consolation is its own punishment in *this* world, whatever may ensue in the next. *In this sense only can we admit that belief in God is necessary to salvation.*

The next requirement—*Love of Mankind* (*ante* p. 108)—may be said to embrace all the other commandments of Christ (*ante* p. 98), which are there divided under five heads, excepting the injunction to *love God*. It may, however, be fairly argued—and no doubt is held by many minds—that love of mankind embraces the love of God, and that the man who cherishes a disinterested love towards his fellow-men obeys the voice of God within him, and is therefore living a life which is acceptable to God. What, in fact, do we or can we ever know of God, excepting by studying the objects of His creation—the wonders of the natural world—from the lowest form of animal and vegetable life; up to man, the highest? It is true that amongst scientific men the physical wonders of the minor objects of the animal kingdom seem to absorb more attention than the moral attributes of man, notwithstanding that the latter are as superior, in point of interest, even to man's physical attributes, as these are to the structure of insects and plants. The man who sympathises with his fellow-men and interests himself in their moral and social progress, with an earnest desire to study the laws and purport of their earthly life, may truly be said to know more of God than the man whose only thoughts are about the safety of his own soul, or whose mind is engrossed with the observance of ecclesiastical forms and ceremonies. The want of faith in God must certainly be a loss to the man to whom prayer is a word of

no meaning, and who sees no relief in time of trouble or distress but that which can be gained by his own unaided exertions. Self-dependence is doubtless a valuable quality; but in the desperate struggle for life, the man who has no faith in any higher power than his own strength and vigilance must undoubtedly lead a much more care-worn and anxious existence than the man who does his best and contentedly leaves the rest to Providence.

The judgment of Christ (*ante* p. 40), that those who have done good to the poor have thereby *done good to him*, coupled with the texts on p. 61 and p. 65, identifying Christ with God, and telling us that he that despiseth Christ despiseth God, and he that receiveth Christ receiveth God, would, in this sense, seem to justify the supposition, that

Those who have *done their duty to their fellow-men have done their duty to Christ and to God; in other words, love to God is embraced in love to mankind.* "He that is not against us is on our part."

Let us consider more closely, therefore, what is *love of mankind*. This, I have already explained, must include both *beneficence* and *benevolence*. The outward performance of good works, unaccompanied by kindly and disinterested *motives*, is no performance of the duty to *love your neighbour*. It is impossible to glance over the list of practical precepts taught by Christ as illustrations of his commandment to *love one another* without being struck with the fact, that their practice involves the cultivation, first of all, of *the inner man*; in short, beneficent deeds must be the *outcome of a benevolent spirit*. Hence we find Christ constantly inculcating the suppression of all feelings of hatred and revenge, of selfishness and uncharitableness, of ambition and self-glorification (which is merely another form of selfishness); also the cultivation of humility and a sincere, forgiving and affectionate behaviour towards our fellow-men.

The love of others implies, above all things, the suppression of the love of self; indeed, the great duty in life may be summed up as *the suppression of self*. It is impossible to read over the teachings of Christ without seeing that this commandment forms the basis of the Christian life; and after eighteen centuries of Christianity we cannot look abroad upon society without being struck with the fact, that human selfishness is the one great cause of all the wickedness that exists in the world to-day; and that we are still as far from the Christian ideal as ever we were. I have already reminded the reader of the fact, that the greatest beneficence is quite consistent with the existence of much selfishness of motive, and it is therefore obvious that the *inner man* must be cultivated before the deeds of the *outer man* can be any criterion for salvation according to the teachings of Christ, as summarised by me on p. 98, *ante*. I venture, therefore, to submit, as deducible from the foregoing arguments—that :

Salvation according to Christ is only to be attained by cultivating a truthful, benevolent, charitable, and unselfish disposition, exemplified by kindly deeds and an upright life.

It seems difficult to sum up the duty of a follower of Christ in regard to his neighbour (as epitomised in the fifth head on page 98, *ante*) in any more comprehensive form than the above, and I fail to see how a man who leads such a life—or rather whose inner nature corresponds with the foregoing description—can possibly fail to satisfy all that Christ requires of those who wish to be saved.

The unselfishness of such a man would keep him from being covetous, ambitious, or given to self-glorification or gluttony. His truthfulness would prevent him from being hypocritical. His unselfishness and benevolence combined would make him prone to almsgiving, and his charity would render him forgiving and merciful to his enemies.

The only quality in which, perhaps, he might come short of Christ's requirements would be in *prayer and faith in God's providing*. Worldly cares and anxiety may certainly cause unhappiness to such a man, if he lacks faith in Providence, as his very unselfishness would, probably, cause him to be anxious about those dependent on him—an anxiety which nothing but prayer and faith in the wisdom of an over-ruling Providence could remove. Here, therefore, we see the need of the first commandment—*love of God*; and setting aside the question of salvation, it is here where the materialist must be at such a disadvantage in the pursuit of happiness. The mere love of others, without this faith in God, would seem—according to the foregoing conclusions—to leave something still deficient in the character of the man who seeks to live up to Christ's teachings by doing his duty to others.

The mere fact that he depends so much upon himself, and sees no source of help external to himself, must tend to concentrate his thoughts too much upon his own affairs. This constant dwelling on material subjects and self-interests, becomes, in time, confirmed into a habit which tends to make him covetous or worldly-minded. If, therefore, an unselfish spirit, a complete absence of care about things we cannot control, and a full reliance upon the loving guidance and protection of an Almighty Father, whose messengers are empowered to save us from calamities and trials which it seems good to Him to avert, can make a man happy in this world; then, surely, it is no exaggeration to say that the man who so believes has an immense advantage over the materialist, *even supposing that his faith has no foundation in fact*. I say this because—since happiness is only a relative term—the man who believes something which seems to another to be a delusion, but which is to him a source of happiness, is, for the time being, to all intents and purposes, a contented man. Happiness requires, above all things, the absence of *care*, and this constant care

and anxiety about worldly affairs causes no small proportion of the unhappiness to be found in the world. How to justify its presence consistently with a firm faith in *God's providing*, is a difficulty which I do not pretend to overcome. One might, indeed, be tempted to conclude that the two are so inconsistent, that their co-existence in one mind is impossible, and the man who worries himself about worldly affairs is not merely unhappy, but fails to fulfil Christ's commandment, and *is, therefore, not a Christian*. If we are to interpret the words of Christ *strictly*, we might even go further and say that he cannot, therefore, be saved: but, of this, more anon.

I may sum up the foregoing observations upon *faith and love of God*, by saying that although it would seem to be charging the Almighty with *injustice* to suppose that He would consign to eternal torments a good man who has no faith in a Supreme Being, simply because he sees no sufficient evidence to support that faith, yet it cannot be denied that—

In this life, at least, there is an appreciable difference in the amount of happiness* which the believer and the unbeliever are capable of enjoying; even supposing belief in God be *not* an essential to salvation

* I have, on page 14, of this book, appended an extract from Mr. J. S. Mill's Essay on "The Utility of Religion," wherein I observe he comes to a similar conclusion.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Inner Man; The New Birth; Repentance.

IN proof of the conclusions arrived at in the last Chapter regarding the real meaning of salvation according to Christ, I find that the New Testament itself affords abundant evidence that such also was Christ's meaning. How else can we explain the oft-repeated allusion to the kingdom of heaven as a condition of the inner man rather than a place of abode?

In Luke 18, we find Christ saying—

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, *the kingdom of God is within you.*” *

I venture to think that in this remarkable saying of Christ is to be found the key-stone of the whole Christian religion. The more the meaning of the passage is fathomed, the more profound appears the truth which it expresses. So entirely does it accord with all rational notions of salvation, that—but for the prejudice which orthodox views concerning heaven and hell has engendered in the minds of modern Christians—I believe all men would agree to accept the word “salvation” in the sense here expressed.

The kingdom of heaven is supposed by the orthodox to be a place of eternal happiness, to which “the elect” will

* Alluding to this text, Mr. Matthew Arnold, in “Literature and Dogma,” very truly observes—“Such an account of the kingdom of God has more right, even if recorded only once, to pass with us for Jesus Christ's own account, than the common materialising accounts if repeated twenty times; for it was manifestly quite foreign to the disciples' own notions, and they could never have invented it.”

be relegated after death, or after the day of judgment. When, therefore, we come to discuss the *Christianity of To-day* we shall see that it lends no sanction to the interpretation which is here sought to be put upon the expression "kingdom of heaven." Nevertheless, I hope to show that, in the light of reason and common-sense, as well as in the light of Scriptural authority—to no small extent, at least—the kingdom of heaven must mean an inner state of the mind and not an outer state of the body.

As *heaven* is generally associated with *supreme bliss*, and as we cannot conceive of heaven in any other sense, one might go so far as to say that they are convertible terms; and were it possible for a man on earth to be supremely happy, he would, to all intents and purposes, be in heaven, since he would have nothing more to desire. If happiness consists in a state of perfect inner contentedness, sustained by the affection of our fellow-men rather than upon the selfish gratification of our wants; and if, as every one knows, a man can take no material possessions out of this world,—it is quite clear that the man whose contentedness depends on the possession and enjoyment of worldly goods will be anything but happy in the next life, where his sole possessions must needs be his own thoughts and emotions, influenced by the feelings with which others regard him. Take from the busy city-man his bank-notes, his investments, his schemes, and his worldly possessions, and thrust him into a world where things spiritual—not things material—are the measure of a man's worth, and what chance of happiness can there be for him? If the happiness of the next world is to consist in material possessions, it will be merely a repetition of the general scramble for wealth which characterises this life. On one point, however, all are agreed—namely, that the possessions which a man takes with him into the next life can only be *spiritual possessions*. The man, therefore, who has kept himself most free from the ties of property and *material* interests, and

who has cultivated those qualities of mind and heart which render him endeared to all who know him, and whose thoughts and emotions in themselves make him happy, will surely possess the best resources within himself for securing happiness in a world where all earthly possessions must be abandoned and the mind and heart alone are the measure of the man. If, therefore, happiness depends less on the bodily wants and possessions than on the qualities of mind and heart which we cultivate, the preparation for our future happiness may very well begin in this world, since the same mental qualities, tastes, and emotions, exist in us now which will dwell in us after death. Were it not so, no man would preserve his identity. Those who believe that after death "the saved" undergo a mental transformation which reduces or raises all to one dead level of moral worth and mental power, will, of course, differ from the foregoing statement; but of this, more anon.

In saying that the kingdom of heaven is within us, Christ must therefore be taken to have meant that happiness, and consequently *salvation*, were within reach of all who lived up to his teachings and developed the character of the inner man in truthfulness, charity, simplicity, benevolence, and humility. All men lead two different lives—the one with their inner selves, and the other with the outer world. The man who is happy *within* may truly be said to have the kingdom of heaven within him. He is usually also happy externally, *i.e.*, in his relations to the external world; but we all know that the man whose outer life appears gay and brilliant may have a perfect hell within him. The more the characteristics of modern society are studied, the more full of meaning does this expression of Christ's appear. The cultivation of interior happiness is the last thing which can be pointed to as the characteristic of the present age. Everywhere the endeavour is to acquire *external* possessions—wealth, position, and rank; and every one who is engaged in the general scramble fondly deludes

himself with the notion that each new acquisition will bring him the happiness he strives for. Few men are wise enough to learn by the experience of others, or they might draw one valuable inference from this universal scramble, namely, that the possession of the prizes sought for does not make the competitors happy, since it is notorious that one object gained, only impels its possessor to strive for another. Five thousand pounds wants fifty thousand; wealth wants position, and when this is gained rank is sought for; whilst those who possess rank—even princes around the throne—suffer from *ennui* if they cannot discover some new excitement. In order, therefore, to be happy, we must commence to change the inner man. *We must suppress the selfish propensities* which impel us to pursue external wealth and self-interest in a thousand forms as a source of happiness, and we must cultivate simplicity of tastes, usefulness of occupation, and a general change of thought and aspirations.

One has only to glance at the list of requirements from those who desire to live up to the Christian standard (*ante* p. 98) in order to see that with most men such a change in the inner man would amount to a complete reformation of character.

This must be the sense in which we are to understand such passages as the following:—

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, *he is a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5 : 17.)

“For in Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*.” (Gal. 6 : 15.)

The foregoing allusion to circumcision as a useless ceremony, having no efficacy in contributing to any man's salvation, may be very well applied to many useless ceremonies of the present day which are required by the Church but were never so intended by Christ. At any rate, it illustrates the argument that salvation consists in such a change of mind as to produce *a new creature*.

Christ puzzled not a little his Jewish hearers by one of his allusions to such a change when he exclaimed,

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (John 3 : 3.)

This allusion to entrance into the *kingdom of God* and the *kingdom of heaven* as being merely a mental change is so frequent that a few more extracts in support of my argument may perhaps lend additional confirmation to it.

"Verily I say unto you, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."

(Matt. 18 : 3; also Luke 18 : 17; Mark 10 : 14.)

"Suffer little children to come unto me for *of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matt. 19 : 14.)

"*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*"

(Matt. 5 : 8.)

"Blessed are *the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matt. 5 : 3, and Luke 6 : 20.)

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. . . . But rather *seek ye the kingdom of God:* and all these things shall be added unto you." (Luke 12 : 31.)

"And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: and *to love him* with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and *to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.* And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*" (Mark 12 : 32.)

If Christ can be shown to have offered the kingdom of God to those who become converted and undergo such a change of character as would bring them, in their mode of life, within the Christian standard of righteousness, it is clear that we must also interpret the word *Salvation* in a very different sense from the orthodox notion of being spared

from the torments of hell fire through faith in Christ's atonement.

The salvation which requires a man to be *born again*, is a salvation of a very different character, and commences in this life. The foregoing allusions to the kingdom of heaven are not, however, the only grounds for concluding that this is the true salvation. Everywhere we constantly find allusions to the gift of *eternal life* as an existing state of mind, since persons still in the body are spoken of as being *dead in sins*, &c.

"And you hath he quickened, *who were dead in trespasses and sins.*" (Ephes. 2 : 1.)

"*For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*" (Rom. 8 : 6.)

"But *she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*" (1 Tim. 4 : 6.)

"And you, *being dead in your sins* and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. (Col. 3 : 13.)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: *but is passed from death unto life.*" (John 5 : 24.)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, *If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*" (John 8 : 51.)

"*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:* but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, *ye shall live.*" (Rom. 8 : 13.)

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, *though he were dead, yet shall he live:* and whosoever *liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* Believest thou this?" (John 11 : 25.)

“For the wages of sin is *death*; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

(Rom. 6 : 23.)

We see from the foregoing that those who are still *unconverted* are spoken of frequently as being *dead* or *in death*, whilst those in whom the new life has been awakened are alluded to as having *life*.

The full meaning of this birth into life, whereby is denoted the change from selfish worldliness and want of faith in God, to a life of simplicity, disinterested benevolence, and faith in the goodness of God, can hardly be realised by those who have never given the matter a thought. Many men look upon the expressions as the cant phraseology of religious enthusiasts, having no practical application to every-day life.

It is, however, easily conceivable that men who in early life were pure-minded and simple in their tastes—enjoying the quiet beauties of nature, and finding pleasure in mere existence—may become, in course of time, so steeped in the cares and dissipations of life as to lose every trace of their former selves. The outer man is still the same perhaps, but the inner man has undergone a marked change, and who can say that it is a change for the better? Such a man may now be so absorbed with the selfish contemplation of his own mercenary schemes, or the gratification of his bodily appetites, that he is *dead* to all the beauties of nature, to all that is pure and good. Perhaps experience of the world has made him cruel and callous; seeing no interests but the present; determined only to enjoy life, and caring not at whose cost; utterly sceptical of any future state or any over-ruling Providence—if, indeed, he ever gives it thought; and, in short, hardened in heart and unhappy within. Let us imagine the effect of a complete change in the character of this man—a return to his former self, and we can at once say that it would be like a new awakening, in fact, a *new birth*. His surroundings may

continue the same. The same beauties of nature, and the same goodness of heart, in those near to him, may still meet his gaze, but he now sees with very different eyes. He is once more *alive* to a thousand capacities of true enjoyment within himself, which formerly were lost to him. Of what use is beautiful scenery to a man whose thoughts are busy with other topics—with base intrigues or mercenary speculations? Nature shows the same lovely tints to him that she does to the pure-minded lover of nature, and the joyous lark carols as merrily to both; but there is just this difference, that the one is *dead* to such charms whilst the other is *alive* to them.

The converse of the picture is equally true. Take a man of pure aspirations and simple tastes to a low music hall—into an atmosphere tainted with tobacco smoke, filled with dissolute men and women, shouting foul language, and reeking with drink—and expect such a man to enjoy himself! The expectation, of course, is vain. He dwells in a different world of thought, and it is impossible for him to exist in such an uncongenial atmosphere. The surroundings that are agreeable to the *roué* are simply disgusting to the pure-minded man; whilst the former is equally dead to the attractions of the latter. To him they appear insufferably stupid. When, however, the libertine comes to see that he is ever going farther away from true happiness, and when the miserable folly of his career strikes home to him, he may once more enjoy what he was formerly blind to. Those enjoyments may have surrounded him all the time, but as the *inner change* had not been made, he was truly *dead* to them.

In this sense, the expressions which I have quoted about *death in sin* are intelligible enough; but it is clear that there can be no birth into a new life, in the sense here alluded to, without *repentance*. This must be—in the case of every wrong-doer—a *sine quâ non* to true happiness or *true salvation*. Salvation by repentance is, in fact, a necessary

corollary to the love and mercy of the Creator. Were it otherwise, we should find that one breach of any of the commandments which Christ enjoined—defrauding, bearing false witness, or adultery—would involve the utter perdition of the guilty one. God is, however, a God of mercy; and *forgiveness of sins*, we are told, is the reward of repentance (see *ante* pp. 88-89). Moreover, it is impossible to conceive of any salvation for evil-doers—consistent with our notions of Divine mercy—excepting as a consequence of *repentance*, and it is equally impossible for an evil-doer in this world to be *happy* in his change of life without repenting of the wrong he has done. The same conditions are here necessary both for *happiness* and *salvation* in the sense in which they are here understood.

“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of *repentance for the remission of sins*.”

(Mark 1 : 4.)

After Christ's resurrection, when he gave his final commands to his disciples, he told them

“That *repentance and remission of sins* should be preached in his name among all nations.” (Luke 24 : 47.)

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that *all should come to repentance*.”

(2 Peter 3 : 9.)

“For godly sorrow worketh *repentance to salvation* not to be repented of.”

[(2 Cor. 7.)

It is needless to quote other passages on this point. All will admit that repentance of previous wrong-doing is a necessity, even for those who believe that faith in Christ's atonement is the one thing needful to salvation. At the risk of repetition I will here summarise the conclusions as they now stand on the subject of Salvation according to Christ.

1. That *salvation according to Christ* is synonymous with *happiness*, and the highest happiness is only attainable by the cultivation of the inner qualities of heart and mind,

enjoined by Christ, and summarised on p. 113 *ante*, benevolence exemplified by beneficence, and accompanied by faith in God and repentance for wrong done.

2. That although it is impossible to suppose that those who conform to these requirements and yet lack faith in God will be eternally lost, yet their want of faith must materially diminish their chances of present and future happiness; and to the extent that happiness and salvation are used as synonymous terms (but not otherwise) can we say that faith in God is essential to salvation.

CHAPTER IX.

What Means Salvation?

HAVING now discussed what appears to me to be the conditions on which Christ offers salvation to mankind, let us enquire what he means by salvation. Does it mean merely the inward change, which I contend for, or does it mean a future state of eternal happiness as the only alternative with a future state of everlasting punishment?

If we turn to the doctrinal teachings of Christ, *ante* p. 58 and his Apostles, p. 67, in order to ascertain what salvation means, we find that to those who comply with the before-mentioned requirements, are offered "forgiveness of sins" and "eternal life," whilst those who fail to do this are variously threatened with "everlasting fire," "everlasting punishment," "everlasting destruction," "vengeance," "the wrath of God," "a lake of fire," "outer darkness," &c., being told also that they will be "damned," will "perish," or "walk in darkness." Most emphatic of all, perhaps, is the description of Christ, in Matthew 25, which I have already referred to, *ante* pp. 40 and 62, of his second coming, when we are told that—

"Before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, &c. Then shall he say unto them on the left, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," &c.

These expressions are so explicit that it is idle to dispute the fact that Christ threatens with everlasting fire those who do not conform to his commands so as to entitle them to salvation. I have, in the foregoing extracts and comments thereon, endeavoured to show that what Christ requires of those who wish to be saved is *not belief in points of doctrine*, but an inward change—a reformation of character, and that his teachings are thoroughly practical and reasonable. It would, however, appear difficult to tone down the fearful nature of the alternative which Christ holds out to those who do not conform to these requirements. Whether Christ really uttered these words, is a matter which may fairly be questioned, and if he did so, his meaning may be different to what we understand by the words.

To punish with everlasting torture any imperfect beings of His own creation would seem, on the face of it, to be singularly inconsistent with the characteristics of mercy and justice which we are told, in the extracts on p. 88, *ante*, are those of the Almighty. Certainly the notion is utterly revolting to the human conscience since it converts a God of Love into a God of Wrath and Vengeance, actuated by precisely those angry motives which Christ came into the world to denounce, and which were utterly opposed to the principles which Christ taught and illustrated on the cross—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

To suppose that the Creator would punish *temporarily* those who have disobeyed His laws, seems quite consistent with reason and experience, since we observe that in the physical laws affecting the body, all transgressions are visited by suffering; but nature is bountiful and, when once the culprit reforms his habits and conforms to nature's laws, his sufferings are mitigated. What is more reasonable than to suppose that similar consequences follow the breach of moral laws? What, too, can be more unreasonable and unjust than to suppose that mankind can be divided by an arbitrary line of demarcation into those who are fit for

heaven, and those who are only fit for eternal punishment in hell fire! Where is such a line to be drawn? especially, if salvation means, as I have endeavoured to show, the attainment of a certain degree of inward purity. There is surely some good trait in almost every man, even the most hardened ruffian; and, when belief or disbelief in some point of doctrine ceases to be the test of a man's merit in the eyes of his Creator, how impossible does it appear that such an arbitrary division into *all good* and *all bad* can be made! It is well known that no men are perfect, and few, if any, are altogether imperfect. There are infinite grades of character, from the worst to the best, and, without fearful injustice and cruelty, it would seem to be impossible to draw a hard and fast line anywhere on the scale of goodness.

When, however, we consider the causes of evil, and how little many of the worst characters are responsible for the condition of moral darkness in which they are born into the world, the injustice of so judging them becomes all the more dreadful.

The laws of physiology teach us that all children inherit good or bad traits of character from their parents, whilst we also know that these characteristics are capable of being considerably modified for better or worse by early training and pure surroundings. Seeing, therefore, that thousands of our criminal classes who have broken Christ's commandments, and therefore, according to the gospel, merit eternal punishment, are really far less blame-worthy for the lives that they have led than many good men are praise-worthy for *their* exemption from temptation,—it would seem to be unjust to treat them as hopelessly vicious and consign them to perdition. Many of them have inherited strong tendencies towards drink or vicious habits of various kinds, or they have been trained from their birth in the immoral atmosphere of our slums, with scarcely even a chance of doing well, or as much as a glimpse of better things. They have,

in short, been all their lives *dead in sin* through no fault of their own. No new life has ever been awakened in them, or ever can be, until their surroundings are changed ; and for these latter they are not responsible. They did not create them, and as they have not in themselves the knowledge requisite for changing them, how can we suppose that a merciful Father would display less mercy in dealing with them than a human Judge would do ?

It is quite true that in the laws regulating our physical bodies, we find no mercy for wrong-doers who have sinned ignorantly. The man who, through ignorance, or even whilst engaged in the performance of a good deed takes an infectious disease, must suffer in precisely the same manner as the man who acquires the same disease through his own vicious conduct. Probably the former has the inward satisfaction of knowing that his sufferings are not the result of causes he has to reproach himself with, and therefore he bears them more philosophically and more hopefully, and, if he has faith in the efficacy of prayer, will perhaps find that his happier frame of mind materially aids his recovery ; whilst the bodily sufferings of the man, who, in addition, endures the inward reproaches of his conscience, may reasonably be expected to be more severe and his bodily recovery less rapid. Where, too, men are crippled from their birth or mentally afflicted, through the misdeeds of their parents, we do not find that nature refuses to punish the innocent for the misdeeds of the guilty. When, however, we apply a similar standard of justice and mercy to the consequences of moral sins, and contemplate the *eternal punishment* of wrong-doers for misdeeds which they are hardly responsible for, the analogy ceases to hold good since we find that the physical sufferings for bodily transgressions are temporary only ; they cannot continue after the death of the body and are therefore *not eternal*, whilst the sufferings with which Christ is supposed to threaten the wicked are to endure for ever.

St. Paul tells us that the physical body is not to live after death, but that we are to have a spiritual body.

"Thou fool that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, *thou sowest not that body that shall be*, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. . . . There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. . . . *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* Now this I say brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*" (1 Cor. 15 : 36-50.)

This being so, the sufferings of the physical body would presumably cease at death, since we are nowhere told that the spiritual body will inherit the deformities and diseases of the natural body. On the other hand, since moral worth *versus* moral shortcomings is the true test of a man's right to salvation, it is most natural and reasonable to suppose that the character and attributes of the man will remain the same after death as before, and that he will not undergo any magical transformation from imperfection to perfection, nor that all men will be raised spontaneously to one standard of perfection, to fit them for heaven. The hypocrite, who has veiled his real character behind the mask of the body, will stand revealed in his true colours, and the conscience of the evil-doer will in all probability be much more active when he is removed from those bodily gratifications, whereby he has been able to stifle it on earth.

If it be true, therefore, that *the kingdom of heaven is within us*, and that salvation is attainable by an inward change, it would seem to be not unreasonable to suppose that the converse is true also, and that the sufferings of a bad conscience will be the real torments—an inward hell,

in fact, for those who have failed to cultivate the love of God and the love of man.

These speculations seem to receive considerable support from the allusions made by Christ and his Apostles to the necessity of an *inward* change. If salvation is an inward state, why should not punishment be so too? If the kingdom of heaven is within us, why not the kingdom of hell too?

In the presence, however, of the foregoing explicit allusions to hell fire and eternal punishment, it is useless to speculate further on a subject about which the New Testament tells us so little. 'All we can conclude is, that *be the punishment what it may, it is our interest and our duty to avoid it*, and this we can easily do by simply doing our duty to our neighbour and leading the life taught by Christ. If every so-called Christian did this, how soon would the chances of those unfortunate beings be improved who at present are the victims of circumstances they cannot control! The number of those who were lost, even supposing the worst to be true, would year by year diminish; until, at last, the millennium would reign upon earth.

Another conclusion which we may bear in mind is this: that whatever be the nature of heaven and hell, Christ nowhere requires us to *believe* or *disbelieve* in them (as described) in order that we may be saved. He tells us, as a matter of solemn warning, that such will be the punishment of those who do not attain salvation; he does not say that salvation is to be attained by believing this or that doctrine, but by *obeying his commands*—by living the life. The natural inference from this is that the particular nature of heaven and hell is not a subject of *vital importance for us to comprehend*. Whatever it be, Christ has pointed out our duty here, and it is no part of our duty here to understand or believe in eternal punishment. Although, in regard to those who feel themselves entitled to salvation, the foregoing would seem a reasonable conclusion, it cannot be denied

that those who consistently entertain the orthodox belief in eternal punishment and do not, or cannot, regard it as a matter of *no concern*, must certainly suffer serious alarm on account of others for whom they have much affection. If Christians, in fact, were as close followers of Christ as they should be, their love of their fellow-men—the sympathy, pity, and charity which they would feel towards the erring, would be so great—in view of the immense amount of evil there is in the world, and consequently, the large number of lost ones in our midst—that they would never know what happiness is in this life. As a matter of fact either the majority of men do not take so much interest in their fellow-men as to feel as much concern for the salvation of the souls of the latter as they ought to do; or else they do not, in their hearts, believe that such a horrible future awaits all who are not as pure and as good, in this world, as they should be. At any rate, every Christian mother in a question affecting her own kith and kin—when she contemplates the future prospects of some erring youth, cut off in his prime, whose many generous traits, in spite of reckless follies, might seem to plead for a little mercy on his behalf—prefers to indulge a vague belief that, somehow or other, there may still be hope for *him*, and the Almighty will not judge him harshly.

We have seen that the breach of one or more of Christ's commandments does not involve loss of salvation providing there be *repentance* for the fault committed. *Apropos* of this, another objection to accepting Matthew's account of an immediate admission into life eternal as the only alternative to everlasting punishment, lies in the support which it seems to lend to the notion that men may lead selfish and reckless lives, and then by a death-bed repentance secure admission into eternal life, upon the same footing as they who have steadily struggled against temptations and endured sacrifices for righteousness' sake, during a whole lifetime. Such a theory is both unjust to the living, and directly calculated

to discourage an obedience to Christ's commands ; since many men may think that "a short life and a merry one," or a career of self-indulgence, is no worse than a pure life, so long as there be time "to make their peace with their Maker" at the last moment.

I conclude, therefore, that the doctrine of heaven and hell and the last judgment, although undoubtedly taught, yet is not required as an article of belief. Moreover, it is—as we understand it—*exceedingly improbable, apparently unjust, and, if anything, rather calculated to discourage the Christian life than otherwise in the minds of those who do believe it.*

As Christ's teachings leave us in the dark about the nature of the life after death, beyond what may be gathered from the foregoing extracts, it is not within the scope of this exposition of *The Christianity of Christ* to speculate further upon the subject, and endeavour to evolve—or show how others have evolved—a more plausible theory. When we come to glance at the theories held by the various religious sects of to-day—notably the Spiritualists and Swedenborgians—we shall be able to take another, and, it may be, a more probable, view of the matter.

CHAPTER X.

Christ's Doctrinal Teachings. Are they necessary to Salvation?

AS I presume the prime object of religion is to teach us our duty to our Maker, and our duty to our neighbour—these also being the two great commandments which summarise the whole of those teachings which Christ pronounced to be *necessary to salvation*—we may safely conclude that doctrines, which Christ taught incidentally, but which do not come under these two great heads, and are therefore not pronounced necessary to salvation, cannot be of the first importance, and need not therefore, be believed, or observed, if our reason and inclination do not prompt us to do so.

For example, the doctrinal teachings of Christ which I have summarised, *ante* p. 99, and those of the Apostles which I have summarised, *ante* p. 106, are nowhere stated to be *necessary of belief* for those who wish to be saved. Strange to say, however, *it is precisely upon these immaterial points of doctrine that the whole of modern Christianity rests, and it is, as a natural consequence, precisely on these points that endless wars, disputes, and unhappiness have raged from the earliest days of Christianity to the present time.* When I consider how universally—amongst millions of Christians all over the world—these doctrinal teachings of Christ are relied on as the most vital and most important to salvation—what learned volumes, by countless divines, have been published in support of such views, and how uniformly the simple teachings of Christ, epitomised

(*ante* p. 98), are ignored or thrust aside, as being of minor importance; I confess it seems the height of presumption, in an unlearned critic like myself, to suggest that Modern Christendom has missed entirely the *most vital of Christ's* teachings, and is building its faith on a rotten foundation!

The extracts before me leave, however, no other alternative than the conclusion that I am right. Should some expression have escaped my notice in the perusal of the New Testament which seems to point to the necessity of *believing in* or *practising* the doctrines and sacraments taught by Christ as a *sine quâ non* to salvation; certainly there are far more passages quoted by me in the six heads on p. 98 and in the thirteen heads on p. 102, which point to an opposite conclusion.

It might, however, be asked, What would be the object of Christ and his Apostles in teaching them, if he did not require us to believe them?

1. Take *the Atonement*, for instance. This doctrine, as we have seen (*ante* p. 58, and *ante* p. 67), is taught both by Christ and the Apostles, but everywhere it is advanced as *a statement of fact merely, and not as an article necessary of belief*. Whatever Christ deemed necessary of belief in order that we might be saved, he scrupled not so to refer to (*see ante* p. 32).

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

"Love your enemies . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

In the extracts from Christ's doctrinal teachings, and those of the Apostles, touching the atonement, *we find no expressions which can be understood as a threat against those who do not believe these statements*. We are told as a matter of fact that "we have redemption through his blood," and that "without shedding of blood is no remission," and that we are "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," &c. Those to whom

these teachings seem reasonable and are acceptable may do themselves no harm by adopting them, providing they live the life of Christ ; but those whose minds are so constituted that they do not see how their sins can be washed out, excepting by repentance—resulting in an inward change, *the new birth*, which Christ elsewhere *does* insist on as necessary to salvation—surely cannot be considered as punishable, if Christ nowhere threatens such consequences. Such persons can very well afford to point to the express denunciations by Christ of evil doers, and their undoubted exclusion from the kingdom of heaven, and the overwhelming evidence in support of salvation by obedience to Christ's commands—of which this doctrine of the atonement is *not* one—and rest content to leave irrelevant points of doctrine to be disputed over by those whose minds delight in such subjects. If belief in the atonement were necessary to salvation, how is it that St. Paul did not express himself as plainly on this subject as he did on the necessity of leading a good life?

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, *that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”
(Gal. 5 : 18.)

“Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the *unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?* Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, *shall inherit the kingdom of God.* And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
(1 Cor. 6 : 8.)

The concluding words of the last extract add as a matter of fact that his readers are "*justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*" This may or may not be the agent in producing our conversion; but one thing is certain that there must be, above all things, *repentance*, and there must be *a new life* and an *obedience of Christ's commandments*, otherwise the whole of Christ's teachings would be neutralised by a casual expression of one of the Apostles.

To sum up the practical bearing of the Atonement upon the question of Salvation, we have only to consider that the Atonement—that is, Christ's laying down his life as a sacrifice for our sins, on which our salvation depends—is quite a distinct and separate matter from the practical teachings of Christ. It is an historical fact, if it be true, which must be accepted or rejected by every man according as the evidence which seems to his mind reasonably to suggest its possibility and probability. If he is unable to accept it, *it is no fault of his*, and it would be unjust and unmerciful to punish him for it. Certainly it is inconceivable that a merciful Father would so deal with him, and all the more so, if—as I contend—Christ never threatened with eternal punishment those who could not accept it, but *did* threaten with punishment those who refused *to lead the life he taught*. In short, the question resolves itself into this: those who believe in salvation by means of belief in the atonement, *rely upon the death of Christ* and perpetually dwell on that theme; whilst those who believe in salvation through obedience to Christ's teachings—as I have tried to understand them—*rely upon the life of Christ*. Let any man ask himself this simple question: Would the value of Christ's teachings have been any less, if he had died a natural death instead of being crucified? Christ is not the only martyr to truth whom the world has known, and although it may be contended that, but for Christ's death in this manner, his teachings would not have attracted the attention they have done;

yet we all know that great truths are always being ushered into the world, and ultimately triumph, in spite of all opposition, and regardless of the fate of their discoverers. The Christians of to-day and the Christians of Christ's time, have both pointed to the miracles as a proof of Christ's divinity, and his resurrection, especially, as evidence of his divine mission. Amongst an ignorant and barbarous people, whom it is necessary to awe into respect and terrify into belief, perhaps such facts may have weight; but the fact that thousands of men now-a-days believe in the value of Christ's teachings and preach them to others—the Unitarians for instance—and yet reject the miracles and the atonement, would seem to prove—if, indeed, any proof were necessary—that the great truths which he taught do not require to be bolstered up by miracles, but commend themselves to us by their own intrinsic merits and beauty. In short, we may conclude that, whether or not Christ did lay down his life for us 1800 years before we were born, and, whether or not he did thereby atone for our sins, those who can *accept and obey his commands*, without being able to understand also the hidden object and meaning of that sacrifice, need—in the face of Christ's promises—give themselves little concern about it.

In thus questioning the importance of a belief in Christ's atonement for our sins, as a *sine quâ non* to salvation, I do not wish to be understood as, in the slightest degree, depreciating the moral value of the sublime lesson of self-sacrifice which Christ's death presents to mankind. As a practical illustration of his own teaching, touching the duty of "suffering for righteousness' sake" (see *ante* p. 37), its value cannot be overrated. I merely object to the interpretation which modern Christianity has, unwarrantably I think, put upon it, in declaring that Christ laid down his life to appease the anger of the Almighty : that those who believe this will be saved, and those who do not believe it will be damned.

2. Let us take the next article of doctrinal teaching, viz.: *Repentance and Remission of Sins* (*ante* p. 59). This doctrine hinges directly upon the preceding one, inasmuch, I presume, no one contends that Christ's atonement alone, *without any repentance* on the part of the sinner, can wash away his sins. All that is contended for the atonement is, that those who *first repent* and *then believe* in the efficacy of Christ's atonement, as a remission of their sins, are thereby saved. Hence repentance is a *sine quâ non* to salvation according to modern theology; and as I have already shown that repentance is a *sine quâ non* to salvation according to Christ, there is no difference between the two on this point. The only question is, *What must follow repentance?* Will mere repentance, accompanied by faith, save a man without the *new life*: without, in short, a complete obedience of Christ's commands and the full performance of the duty to his neighbour and love to God, which has been before enlarged upon? Were there no possibility of progress after death, then, of course, such a repentance, at the last moment, must be considered as of saving efficacy, or else the teachings of the New Testament are vain. The possibility of a *new life* in spirit, being commenced, even *after* death, would seem the more reasonable supposition; since it would remove the injustice of placing a death-bed repentance on a level with a life of self-sacrifice and purity. Having already touched upon the question of repentance (*ante* p. 124) it is needless to say more, since every man who admits that repentance is necessary to salvation, believes it as a doctrine.

Whether *remission* of sins follows *immediately* on repentance is a question which is fairly open to discussion. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine any repentance which is not followed by the new life I have spoken of; since true repentance always implies a desire on the part of the person who has injured others, to make compensation to the sufferers. All *human* notions of justice are based

upon the supposed necessity of making compensation to the injured one. What would be thought of a person who, after defrauding hundreds of his fellow-men, shows his repentance by giving a large sum to the poor-box or to the erection of a church? It is hardly likely that the sufferers would regard their injuries as compensated for by such proceedings on the part of their oppressor; whereas, *if he asked their forgiveness, and did his utmost to make restitution*, he would do all that an honourable man could be expected to do, and the onus of being so unchristian as to harbour further resentment, would rest with them, not with him—providing, of course, his acts were sincere. Every genuine repentance in the eyes of God, would seem therefore to necessitate a complete inward change and *a new life in the future*.

3. The next point of Christ's doctrinal teaching, alluded to, *ante* p. 99, is *Belief in Christ*. This I have so fully enlarged on, *ante* p. 100, that I need say no more here in support of my contention that it does not mean anything more or less than *obedience to Christ's commandments*.

4. We then come to the doctrine of *the Resurrection of the Dead*. This, too, as the reader will see, *ante* p. 61, and p. 73, is not a doctrine necessary to be believed in as a *sine quâ non* to salvation. It is nowhere so stated, either by Christ or the Apostles. It is advanced by them as a statement of fact. We are required to obey Christ's commandments or we shall not be saved; but we are not told that if we disbelieve in the resurrection of the dead, we shall not be saved. Whether we believe it or not, if true, *our doubts will not alter the fact*. Many materialists see no reason to believe that their bodies will rise again, and yet they lead good lives, in so far as obedience to the great commandment to love their neighbour is concerned; though they may have no faith in the existence of a Supreme

Being. That they will be punished for their disbelief there is no proof in the Gospels ; but we are certainly told that there will be a resurrection both of the *good* and the *bad*, and that all men will be judged *according to their works* (see *ante* p. 40). I have already shown, on p. 130 *ante*, that there is sufficient proof in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, that it is not the body of flesh and blood that is to rise again, but another—a *spiritual body*.

Although a belief in this doctrine may not be *necessary to salvation*, there is hardly any other that a man who seeks happiness in this life, can so ill afford to dispense with ; since no *good* man could possibly see the dearest objects of his affection torn from his arms by the ruthless hand of death and continue as contented and indifferent as before, touching the immortality of the soul, and the possibility of meeting his loved ones again. There are men, doubtless, who care little about the question in reference to *themselves*; but it is surely inconceivable that any man, with much affection, can be as happy *without* hope of meeting his wife and children again, or without belief in the continued existence of those he mourns as dead, as the man who does possess this faith and hope.

It would seem, therefore, to be reasonable to conclude on this subject, as we did touching the value of faith in God and the value of prayer,

That although a belief in a future state is not necessary to salvation, according to Christ, yet it is calculated materially to increase our happiness* on earth; and, so far as we regard *happiness* and *salvation* as synony-

* Since writing the foregoing, I observe that Mr. John Stuart Mill, in his Essay on the Utility of Religion, comes to a similar conclusion, and admits that "the value of religion to the individual, both in the past and present, as a source of personal satisfaction and elevated feelings, is not to be disputed." Again, comparing the happiness of the sceptic with the believer, he says, "Nor can I perceive that the sceptic loses by his scepticism any real and valuable consolation except one: the hope of reunion with those dear to him who have

mous terms (but not further), can we say that a belief in the resurrection of the dead is "necessary to salvation."

5. *Everlasting punishment* is the next of Christ's doctrinal teachings, as enumerated on, p. 99 *ante*, but having already discussed this, on p. 133, under the heading—*What means Salvation?*—and having there concluded that it is not required of us as an article of belief, I need say no more here.

6. *Salvation of the Elect* comes next in the list, and on referring back to the extracts on p. 62 and p. 74, which support this doctrine, both as taught by Christ and by his Apostles, we are also bound to admit that it is a matter of no vital importance whether we believe it or not, as regards our chances of salvation. St. Paul tells his readers—"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," and to the Galatians he talks of God "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself," &c. Supposing that this monstrous doctrine were true—that an all-powerful and all-merciful Father would create human beings imperfectly, and ordain beforehand that some favoured ones should be saved, and some unfortunate ones should suffer eternal torments—let us merely ask ourselves what would be the effect of a belief in it on the saved and on the lost respectively? Could any portion of mankind alter their destiny by believing or disbelieving it? If so, they would alter God's destiny. If not, then neither the one nor the other need trouble themselves to believe it, since it would not affect their *future* happiness; whereas it would surely be much more conducive to the *present* happiness of

ended their earthly life before him. That loss, indeed, is neither to be denied nor extenuated. In many cases it is beyond the reach of comparison or estimate; and will always suffice to keep alive, in the more sensitive natures, the imaginative hope of a futurity which, if there is nothing to prove, there is as little in our knowledge and experience to contradict."

both of them *not* to believe anything so horrible and repulsive. Nay more, if it were true—and do what we can, we cannot alter the predestined will of God—that *some only* will be saved, and the others lost—of what use is it to obey Christ's commands at all and try to improve ourselves? It is surely hardly worth while to waste further words on such a doctrine, especially as I have already touched upon it, *ante* p. 89. We may as well therefore turn to the next subject—

7. *The Lord's Supper*, p. 62, and p. 74, *ante*. Here again the same remark applies that I have already urged, namely, that nowhere is it stated that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is necessary to salvation. Christ certainly said to his disciples, "*Do this in remembrance of me,*" but he did not preach it to the world and require every one who wished to enter the kingdom of heaven to do it. St. Paul merely adds to his version of the same ceremony a threat against the man "*that eateth and drinketh unworthily.*" Those, therefore, who think they are worthy of the Lord's Supper may derive benefit from attending the sacrament; but to require either a belief in it, or a participation in it, as in any degree *necessary to salvation*, is a requirement not sanctioned by Scripture.

It is just one of those *outward* professions of *inward* purity whose value it is impossible for any second party to judge of. We may, indeed, say with St. Paul, in reference to saint days, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Seeing that Christians quietly ignore the ceremonies of feet-washing, anointing the head, and disobey habitually the injunction not to swear (see *ante* p. 76), it is difficult to see how we can regard the Lord's Supper as a ceremony of vital importance simply because Christ told his disciples to do it in remembrance of him.

8. *Baptism*, another ceremony which I have classed under

the doctrines taught by Christ and his Apostles (*ante* p. 63 and 73). Here, too, we find baptism certainly enjoined; and, in the spurious verses of St. Mark, Jesus even goes so far as to say, "He that *believeth and is baptized* shall be saved; but he that *believeth not* shall be damned."

Here damnation is threatened to the man who does not believe, but (excepting by implication) it is *not stated that baptism is necessary to salvation*. St. John the Baptist, on the other hand, is said to have "preached the *baptism of repentance* for the remission of sins." Upon the strength of one stray passage of Scripture it is impossible, in the face of emphatic declarations elsewhere touching salvation by faith, by repentance, and by obedience to Christ's commands, &c., to build up a doctrine teaching baptism as necessary to salvation, and especially in the face of St. Paul's extraordinary contradiction (*ante* p. 74), that Christ sent him "*not to baptize* but to preach the gospel." I have already considered (*ante* p. 110) the improbability of a merciful God condemning any of his creatures to eternal damnation for not *believing*. The same arguments will, of course, apply with much more force against the probability of his condemning any one for not being *baptized*.

9. The next items of Christ's doctrinal teachings are the most formidable of all—namely,

His Divinity and the Trinity.

Here again the same astonishing fact strikes the unbiassed reader of the New Testament which I have already alluded to in connection with the rest of Christ's doctrinal teachings, that *he nowhere requires belief in this doctrine as necessary to salvation*. When we consider how Christianity in all ages has put forward this doctrine as an indispensable article of belief in those who wish to be saved, it certainly is little less than astounding to find how flimsy is the foundation on which such a gigantic superstructure rests.

If the *belief* in Christ's divinity held anything like the important place in Christ's teachings which his modern followers would have us believe it does, we should expect to find that everywhere in his teachings, Christ would have advanced it and preached it ; whereas we find, on the contrary, that he was singularly reticent on the subject, and almost always called himself the *Son of Man*, and only when closely pressed did he admit that he was the Son of God. Even then we find the admission very cautiously expressed. The expressions, taken as a whole, seem, however, undoubtedly, to endorse the belief that Christ asserted himself to be divinely inspired. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me"—"The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works"—"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me"—"I proceeded forth and came from God"—are expressions which undoubtedly support the belief that Christ was something more than an ordinary mortal.

Although he said, "I and my Father are one," and "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," it is abundantly clear that Christ did not arrogate to himself the position of the Almighty Creator of the Universe. He ever spoke of One higher than himself, and taught his Disciples to pray to One higher than himself, when he said, "Our Father which art in heaven," and when he spoke of God, repeatedly, as "My Father." On his cross he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Again he says, "All things are delivered to me of my Father,"—"Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God," &c.

These statements, touching Christ's divinity, are precisely on the same footing as those touching the atonement, the resurrection of the dead, &c. It is quite true that again and again do we see it stated, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,"—"Every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life,"—"He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." These statements are

explicit enough, without doubt, and they are relied on by modern theologians as proof conclusive that a belief in Christ's divinity is necessary to salvation. It will, however, be seen that although they express the advantages of belief, they are entirely silent regarding the disadvantages of unbelief. They do not, therefore, prove that salvation can *only* be earned by such belief, especially when read side by side with the oft-repeated injunctions of Christ and his disciples, that we should obey his commands, rather than worship him.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; *but he that doeth the will of my Father* which is in heaven.”

“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

It is needless to repeat here quotations which are to be found in abundance under the *Practical Teachings of Christ* and the *Practical Teachings of the Apostles*, and which I have already commented upon under the title *Salvation According to Christ* (*ante* p. 101).

If I have proved to the satisfaction of the reader that Christ requires us to purify the inner man and lead a new life in obedience to his commands, he will be all the more ready to agree with the following view of this vexed question.

If Christ did *not* insist on our believing it—and reason and justice are all against such a supposition (*see* the remarks under “*The Law for the Heathen*,” *ante* p. 92, and “*The Law for the Honest Doubter*,” *ante* p. 94)—then the best course for all Christians to adopt is to leave every man “to be fully persuaded in his own mind,” and no longer to entertain uncharitable or hostile feelings towards those whose minds are so constituted that they cannot comprehend the mystery. If any excuse for such a frame of mind were needed, surely such expressions as the following, by

Christ himself, would induce those to pause who denounce unbelievers :—

“No man *knoweth the Son* but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” (Matt. 11 : 27.)

“No man knoweth *who the Son is* but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” (Luke 10 : 22.)

We might ask the same question *apropos* of this doctrine that was asked, *ante*, touching the atonement—“Does the value of Christ’s teachings depend upon the peculiar mystery attending his *birth* or his *death*, rather than upon their intrinsic merit and beauty?” Surely if Christ’s teachings are divine, we need not doubt that they will speak for themselves, and will make that progress in the world which all great truths have done. It is only necessary to glance at the enormous spread of Christianity over the globe to see that this has been the case in the past, and there is no reason to doubt that it will continue to be so in the future. In short, *what we have to look to is, Christ’s life and teachings, not his birth or his death.*

Let us take another view of the question. No man knows whence proceeds the soul which inhabits the body of any little child born into the world to-day. For anything we know to the contrary, the spiritual principle in every man now living, emanates at birth from God. This is the general supposition I believe. Man has power, given to him by the Almighty, to procreate the physical organism through which that spirit shall express itself, and according to the amount of perfection there is in the *body*, so will there be power for the indwelling soul to express itself, in a good or evil life. If, then, we are so much in the dark regarding the mystery attaching to the birth of our own children, how unjust does it not seem for us to condemn and denounce other men who are unable to understand whence emanated

the spiritual principle which inhabited the physical organism of a child born into this world 1800 years ago!

If the spirit indwelling in Christ came, as he himself tells us, from God, have we any reason to doubt that the soul indwelling in our children also comes from God? and, without presuming to place man on a level with Christ, is it not much more rational to conclude that Christ was simply *endowed with more of the Divine Spirit than any other man, before or since, and that in this sense, and in this sense only, was he divine?* All men are differently endowed to-day. If we believe that our souls come from God, we must therefore conclude either that some are better endowed—that is, are more *divine* in their nature than others—or else that all are alike endowed, and the difference between them depends on the different capacities of the body in which the soul is condemned to live on earth.

The following passages seem strongly to corroborate the foregoing theories :—

“ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

(1 Cor. 3 : 16.)

“ And hereby we know *that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*”

(1 John 3.)

If the reader agrees with the foregoing conclusions, he will be prepared to admit that the view of Christ's divinity here expressed is one which may be consistently held by a sincere Christian and by the unbeliever also.

In conclusion, I would also refer the reader once more to the frequent use of the expression, “The sons of God” (*ante* p. 75) by the Apostles in their doctrinal teaching.

10. As regards *the Trinity*, no more need be said than that it is a doctrine we are in no wise bound to believe on pain of damnation. Those who can comprehend it, and

find satisfaction in it, may, of course, receive it. Those who cannot so receive it, need give themselves no concern about it, since Christ never taught it as an article of belief, or one having the slightest connection with our salvation further than to say—

“Whosoever shall speak a word *against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him*, but unto him that *blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.*”

(Luke 12 : 10.)

“Whosoever *speaketh against the Holy Ghost*, it shall not be forgiven him.”

(Matt. 12 : 32.)

The above certainly expresses a distinct threat against those who blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, but there is no command for us to *believe in the Holy Ghost*; whereas, on vital points, we find commands and injunctions in abundance. It seems, therefore, quite unwarrantable to build up a doctrine touching the Trinity, and require adherence to it under pain of eternal punishment.

11. The doctrine of *natural depravity and original sin* seems to have *never been taught or sanctioned by Christ himself*,* but emanated from, or was at least taught by, St. Paul (see the extracts, *ante* p. 71). Christ, on the contrary, said—

“Suffer little children to come unto me, *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*”

(Matt. 19 : 14.)

“Except ye be converted and *become as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Does this agree with St. Paul's statement about our being “by nature the children of wrath”? Rather does it show that Christ pointed to the little child as an emblem of purity and innocence, which others are to imitate; and, in

* Bishop Burnet, in his Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, is unable to quote a single passage from Christ's words in support of this doctrine. Its importance, if true, must be very great since the doctrine of Christ's atonement depends on it. Hence it is incredible that Christ could have omitted all mention of it, or used many expressions which imply the opposite, were it important for us to believe.

this respect, it proves the nature of the salvation he offered to be a return to the natural inward purity of the child.

The doctrine of natural depravity depends primarily upon the Old Testament account of Adam's fall, in consequence of which, all men were thereafter born into the world sinners, and needed the sacrifice of Christ's life in order to appease the wrath of God and induce Him to save from eternal destruction those on whose behalf Christ should intercede.

The notion that a merciful God would condemn all mankind to eternal punishment because one man—thousands of years before we were born—disobeyed God's commandments by stealing an apple, is so preposterous that it is inconceivable how any one can give credence to the fable, and yet it is on this that the whole theory of the atonement rests! We are told that Adam was made after the image of God, and yet he was so imperfectly constituted that he could not resist temptation; and we are led to believe that God—who is "kind to the unthankful and to the evil," and "who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"—condemned not only Adam, but all his descendants after him down to the time of Moses, to eternal punishment for not being created perfect!

If the reader will turn back to the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, *ante* p. 87, under the headings, "*Is God merciful?*" and "*Salvation for all,*" I think he will be disposed to admit that this doctrine is opposed to all God has taught us, not only in the Bible, but in the Book of Nature, regarding His attributes of mercy and justice. Of sin there is, no doubt, more than enough in the world; but to believe one moment that, at birth, the soul proceeds from God, and the next, to assert that we are all, by nature, "children of wrath," is little less than blasphemy against the Creator. If, on the other hand, it is said the soul does *not* emanate from God, whence does it originate?—from man or the devil? Seeing that Christ compared the purity of the child

to the purity of those who dwell in the kingdom of heaven, it is difficult to see how either of the latter theories could be maintained for an instant.

Assuming, therefore, that the purity of the child is the standard of goodness which we are to live up to, we have certainly a sufficiently high standard to follow. Since the man of the world, *with* the advantages of a Christian training, finds it hard to attain this ideal,—the ideal itself, as seen in the purity of infancy—being entirely the result of natural endowments, *without* the advantages of a Christian training—must surely be very little tainted with sin. This alleged purity, being therefore the result of *natural* endowments, is evidently opposed to a doctrine which teaches that all children are conceived in sin and by *nature* depraved.

When, however, we turn from the words of Christ to the book of nature, we are compelled to admit that, as a matter of fact, all children are differently endowed. Some have inherited tendencies to *evil* and others to *good*; and yet, in all these cases, we can trace the cause back to the parents or ancestors who have broken some of nature's laws, and thus entailed this sin and suffering on their offspring. Those who are thus badly endowed—by man rather than by the Creator—have a harder struggle to undergo, in their efforts to live up to the standard of Christ's teachings and to attain salvation; whilst, to the well-born, the life comes much easier. In this sense, but in no other, are *some* men born *naturally depraved*; but we need not, as orthodox theology seems to do, hold God responsible for it, by referring it back to the time of the creation and placing of man under a divine curse, since we see that *the cause lies with man*; nor, on the other hand, need we argue that *all men* are so endowed as to be prone to evil, since it is well known that the converse is often the case.

I should like here to refer the reader once more to the observations on p. 24 of the Introduction, where I have endeavoured to show grounds for rejecting altogether the

doctrine of Original Sin. If, then, I have been able to show also that there is as little authority for the doctrine of natural depravity—in fact, *that Christ never taught it*—the main prop of orthodox Christianity tumbles to the ground; since it is entirely upon the *theory* that all men are under God's curse and deserving of his wrath—firstly for the sin of Adam, and secondly for their own inborn sins—that the supposed necessity of any atoning sacrifice on the part of our Saviour depends. When once we realise the great truth that man is *not under a curse*, and that he is *not deserving of God's wrath (excepting for sins that he himself may commit)*, much of the gloom and ugliness of orthodox Christianity would disappear. It is owing to the assumption of man's inborn wickedness, that we find so much cringing self-abasement amongst writers upon religion—the constant allusion to man's inherent worthlessness and the necessity of “working out his salvation in fear and trembling.”

In conclusion, therefore, we may safely say that, even if the doctrine *were true*, our belief or disbelief of it is not made a necessity of our salvation, since we are all endowed with an inner conscience which tells us that we are more or less imperfect, and in proportion as we believe *that* and “strive after righteousness,” so shall we comply with all that Christ requires of those who wish to be saved. What difference can it possibly make to us whether we believe we are imperfect, by reason of Adam's original sin or by reason of inherited tendencies from our immediate ancestors, so long as we *do* admit our imperfection? We are distinctly told by Christ that we shall be saved, if we live up to this standard, and seek forgiveness for the past—original sin notwithstanding! Again, therefore, must we conclude that this doctrine, like all the preceding ones, is *of no vital importance*. Those who find satisfaction in believing it may accept it. Those who cannot see the justice or reason of it, can well afford to pass it by.

12. Lastly, *Praise and Prayer* are enjoined by Christ and his Apostles, but are not taught as necessary to salvation. I have already discussed (*ante* p. 114) the value of prayer and endeavoured to show that it implies faith in God, and that those who have this faith will necessarily be more happy than those who have it not. As a natural outcome of their faith they will, of course, praise God as they will pray to him when in need.

Modern Christianity requires the observance of one day in seven according to the Mosaic commandments; but although Christ alluded to some of these commandments, when asked, "What must I do to be saved?" (*ante* p. 32) yet we find no reference to the commandment, "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-day." On the contrary, we find that Christ paid no particular regard to it, but walked abroad in the country and plucked ears of corn, for which he was taken to task by the Pharisees. Had he regarded it as of vital necessity to salvation that we should observe the Sabbath, he would undoubtedly have so declared it.

St. Paul tells us,

"One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. 14 : 5.)

That it is good for men to assemble together and praise God—throwing aside all worldly thoughts on one day in seven—there can be no doubt; but it is certainly bad, and contrary to Christ's teachings—about living up to his commands—to make religion, as so many do, a matter for consideration on the Sabbath only. Probably nothing more contributes to this fatal habit of the present day than the utterly unpractical doctrines of modern Christianity—the perpetual harping upon useless points of dogma to the utter neglect of Christ's *practical* teachings, which I have endeavoured to show are *alone* deserving our attention.

The religion of Jesus, in short, is an eminently practical

rule of life inculcating, above all things, a pure life and the cultivation of the inner man—benevolence exemplified by beneficence. What better definition of true religion can one find than that of St. James, where he says,

“Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
(James 1 : 27.)

CHAPTER XI.

Is it Possible to Comply with Christ's Commands?

IN the Introduction to the third edition of his "Creed of Christendom," Mr. W. R. Greg asks the question, "Is a Christian life feasible?" and proceeds to consider five of the before-named practical precepts of Christ in the light of modern civilisation. Of the precepts commanding *Non-resistance*, he says Christ distinctly "commands unresisting endurance of violence and wrong, whether directed against person or property," and it is impossible to tone it down to a "prohibition of mere retaliation or blame of hasty resentment or vindictive memory." Mr. Greg then proceeds to show, most logically and conclusively, that this precept is universally ignored amongst all Christian countries and peoples, that it is impossible to carry it out, and that, even if possible, it would produce untold mischief and directly encourage violence and wrong. Mr. Greg sums up his able argument by the conclusion, that "Christ's exhortations are a guide to the spirit we must cherish, not to the conduct we must pursue."

Touching *Almsgiving*, Mr. Greg next points out, with equal ability, that this also is a precept it is impossible and impolitic literally to obey. For the arguments he uses I must refer the reader to Mr. Greg's pages. He shows that indiscriminate almsgiving is noxious to the recipients, inasmuch as "it fosters all mean and unchristian vices: idleness, self-indulgence, and falsehood. It is noxious, in the next place, to the deserving and industrious poor, from whom it diverts sympathy. It is noxious, also, to the

entire community, among whom it creates and cherishes a class of most pernicious citizens." Mr. Greg concludes that Christ really desired "to produce a spirit of boundless compassion and love which should inspire his disciples with anxiety to do all the good possible, and to render all the aid possible to those who were in distress or want; his aim was to elevate, not to degrade; to foster the Christian virtues, not the selfish vices."

In regard to *Improvvidence*, Mr. Greg again points out the evils which a rigid adherence to Christ's precept, to "take no thought for the morrow;" would produce, and shows that it is the improvvidence of our working-classes which is their greatest curse, and "condemns them to squalor, to indigence, to dependence, to wretched habitations, to unwholesome surroundings, and to all those moral evils and dangers which follow in the wake of these things." He argues that Christ's intention was to "assail the inordinate worldliness which constituted one of the most insurmountable obstacles to the reception of Christ's doctrine," and concludes that if Christ were to return to earth he would probably teach us to "take thought for to-morrow and provide for its necessities, in order that, when to-morrow comes, you may be free enough from sordid wants and gnawing cares to have some moments to spare for the things that belong unto your peace."

In dealing with the next point—*The Denunciation of Wealth*—Mr. Greg proceeds to show that "there is no line of conduct so emphatically condemned by Christ, and so eagerly pursued by Christians, as the pursuit of riches," and that in all ages and in all countries, Christians have persistently ignored this teaching. He points out "how necessary is the accumulation of capital to those great undertakings which carry on the progress and the civilisation of our complex modern communities," and concludes that "the employment of affluence, and not its pursuit or its possession, is the fit subject for our moral judgments."

Mr. Greg's answer to the question, "Is a Christian life feasible?" is in the affirmative. He concludes that "we are and may remain Christians, and that we can and ought to obey the Christian rule of life; but that, in order to do either, we must deal with the kernel, not with the husk; we must penetrate to the true mind and temper of Jesus."

As Mr. Greg's work has so ably dealt with these precepts, forming a portion of those collected together under the foregoing heading, *Salvation according to Christ*, it is needless for me to go over the same ground, even were I able to add anything to what he has said. I need make no apology, therefore, for giving an epitome of Mr. Greg's objections to these practical precepts of Christ. Although we cannot help agreeing with Mr. Greg that, taken literally, these precepts would do more harm than good, yet their removal from the Christian's rule of life would certainly be attended with equal harm. The lesson we learn from their evident inapplicability to our needs is, as Mr. Greg points out, that we must regard the *spirit*, not the *letter* in which they are written. The same liberty of interpreting passages of Scripture in conformity with our reason and common sense, which even the most orthodox and narrow of theologians do claim for themselves when dealing with puzzling precepts like those in question—we are equally at liberty to apply to abstruse, unintelligible, or inconsistent points of *doctrinal* teaching.

Every one of the precepts which Mr. Greg takes exception to contains in it a valuable germ of truth, and if, as he says, we adapt this to our needs and reject the husk, we shall find no lack of nourishment for our soul's welfare.

Although one of the first instincts which God has planted in our breasts—namely, the law of self-preservation—prompts us to resist wrong, either in regard to person or property, it is by no means clear that there are not many opportunities in every-day life in which we can prove that non-resistance is better than active resistance, at least when

resistance takes the place of counter-aggression. This latter would appear, however, too often to partake of *revenge*, a *sin* which Christ also denounced, and about whose ill effects on the moral character of those indulging it—to say nothing of its tendency to provoke retaliation—there can be no doubt. In regard, however, to almsgiving, it is impossible to deny that all Mr. Greg advances against *indiscriminate* almsgiving is deserving of our approval. To fulfil Christ's commands in this respect we need give none the less; but we are bound to give *wisely*, and so as to avoid indirectly *injuring* those whom we would benefit. The case of the man who gives money to the poor, in the shape of finding them employment producing no profit to himself, or in presenting them with a people's park or picture gallery, affords an instance of almsgiving which does good to both donor and recipient, and sufficiently proves that almsgiving, if wisely directed, is not an evil. We must recollect that almsgiving, in the sense Christ probably intended it, is not merely giving *money*, but includes providing for the *bodily* wants, or it may be the *intellectual* wants of those who are not so well endowed as ourselves.

No one reading the practical precept of St. Paul about honest labour and idleness—"If any would not work, neither should he eat"—can doubt that those who by their almsgiving encourage idleness are acting *contrary* to the teachings of true Christianity. Almsgiving is too often a selfish evasion of one's duty. It saves us trouble, and we often get rid of an importunate beggar by giving him money; but true almsgiving, in the sense in which Christ probably meant it—that is, if accompanied by that sympathy and love for one another which he also requires of us—would seem to require something much more than this. There is, in fact, more true compliance with Christ's teaching in a kind look and a few words of genuine sympathy, than in any amount of money, the giving of which involves no sacrifice or trouble to the donor.

Touching improvidence and the love of wealth, there is much, too, in what Christ taught, of the utmost importance to us in the present day. The abuse of these precepts which is so characteristic of this age, is owing to the extensive prevalence of *selfishness*. The improvidence of the working-classes is caused by their reluctance to make any sacrifices for the future and by their love of self-indulgence in the present. It may be, too, that almsgiving, in the shape of poor relief, tends to undermine their self-reliance. In regard to the love of wealth: here *selfishness* again is the prime mover, and it is needless to remind the reader that selfishness is more opposed to the Christian teachings of Christ than any other vice.

In regard to improvidence, I have already pointed out that the true observance of Christ's requirements would seem to hinge directly upon our having *faith* in God's power and His willingness to help us in the hour of need. Christ implies this faith when, after enjoining his followers to take no thought what they should eat or what they should drink, he adds,

“Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* . . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”

Although, therefore, on the one hand, we may safely conclude that it would be utterly wrong to trust entirely to God's providing, yet, on the other hand, it is quite as unlikely to conduce to our happiness to rely entirely on ourselves. The man who *has faith* would never trust to himself alone, since he knows by experience of how little avail are the schemes of men, and how true it is that “L'homme propose et dieu dispose.” There are hundreds of circumstances which men cannot control, scheme they ever so wisely—a fact which every man learns sooner or later.

Since true happiness is inconsistent with a perpetual anxiety about our worldly affairs or complete absence of hope in a future state for ourselves and those we love, it would appear that some of that *faith in God* which Christ requires of us would seem to be a necessity to those who wish to understand and obey his teachings on the subject of "taking no thought for the morrow."

In regard to riches, the mistake which most men make, seems to lie in forgetting that money is *power*: the power to *do good to others*, or the power to *gratify our own selfishness*,—and it is precisely in proportion to the extent that money is sought after and utilised for the *former* purpose that we prove ourselves to possess a right appreciation of Christ's teaching. In short; it comes once more to a question of *motives*. The rich capitalist whose thoughts are fixed on the pleasure which wealth brings to himself—being necessarily a selfish man—is certainly far from the kingdom of God, since we are told that it dwells only in those who are *unselfish*. In regard to the capitalist, whose wealth only suggests increased scope for giving pleasure to *others*, we can easily understand that Christ's denunciation of wealth and covetousness has no application to him. As it is needless to remind the reader that the former rather than the latter motive is the prevailing one amongst the wealthy of to-day, I submit that we are not justified in asserting that Christ's teachings—in spirit at least, if not literally—are needless or inapplicable in this nineteenth century.

PART II.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF TO-DAY.

CHAPTER XII.

Introductory Remarks.

HAVING now endeavoured to present to the reader a general outline of the *Religion of Jesus*, with such comments thereon as seemed necessary to make him understand it in the light that I have ventured to view it, we will now turn our attention to the Christianity of To-day, and try to discover how far it differs from or coincides with that taught by Christ. Should I be able to prove to any minds that the barriers which separate Christian from Christian in our day, are baseless creations of the human brain and may therefore be safely overturned, my efforts will not have been in vain, since to remove ill-will and prejudice between man and man is surely an object worthy of every one's ambition, be he Christian or infidel.

Before considering the tenets of modern Christianity it will be as well to remind the reader—who believes in salvation only through faith in Christian doctrines, and perhaps, too, the doctrines of some particular sect of Christians—that, according to reliable statistics,* there are *twelve*

* See *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, title, "Religion."

hundred and seventy millions of men and women in this world of ours, who have a religious belief. This religious belief, doubtless, in nearly all cases, involves a belief in a God, and in worshipping Him, they really worship the same God as we do, though their conceptions of Him may not agree with our beliefs. As I shall show presently, there is abundant evidence in the Old Testament that the Jewish conception of God—as a God of vengeance, jealousy, and wrath—differed also considerably from our conception of the Deity, as taught by modern Christianity. Of this countless host of God's creatures who now, to the best of their lights, believe and worship what they conscientiously hold to be true and good, the proportion of *Christians* is actually not more than *one-fourth* in point of numbers; and of the three hundred and fifty millions of Christians in the world, only ninety-five millions are Protestants as against one hundred and eighty millions of Catholics. Taking the Protestants, we find that the Anglican Church can claim no more than *fifteen million followers*! In the presence of these undeniable facts, what are we to say of the ignorance bigotry, and intolerance—to say nothing of the almost blasphemous presumption—which characterise the adherents of any one of these comparatively insignificant subdivisions of Christian sects—be they Roman Catholics with one hundred and eighty millions, or Anglicans with only fifteen millions—who have the audacity to assert that the Almighty will punish everlastingly all who do not think as they do? They do not stop to think that, in their wholesale condemnation, they not only consign to eternal perdition those of their fellow-Christians who differ from their favourite opinions, but the whole of the nine hundred millions of men and women outside the Christian faith!

Not only are we Christians in a minority of one-fourth of the populations of the earth, but our faith is split up into so many petty subdivisions, that it is impossible for an inquirer into the principles of modern Christianity to dis-

cover where true Christianity is to be found. Perhaps this fact may be taken as the best argument that it is not to be found in any one of them. There are no fewer than twenty-two different sects of Christians amongst the ninety-five millions of Protestants alone, *who all claim, either directly or by implication, that they alone have the truth*; and most of them impliedly believe, if they do not, like the Roman Catholic and English Churches, publicly *assert*, that all who do not accept their particular interpretation of truth will be damned!

Since, however, truth can never be divided against itself, we may learn from these statistics one great fact, to begin with, which it would be well if all sectarians would take to heart, and that is: *that all these sects cannot be right, nor is it probable that all, save one, can be wrong*. Men of the greatest learning, earnestness, and piety, are to be found in the ranks of all of them, and these men sincerely believe—according to the reason which God has given them—that their creed and practice is alone acceptable to the Almighty. Is it not, therefore, almost an inevitable inference that not one of them has the *whole truth* to the exclusion of the others, but that truth and error exist in all of them? Again, if we infer this from the differences amongst Christians, may we not also infer another and a still greater fact—namely, that although the three hundred and fifty millions of Christians may have *amongst them* the *whole truth*, yet it is exceedingly improbable that all other religious bodies in the world are in absolute darkness and condemned by the Creator to be punished eternally for not having more light! They may have less of the truth than we have, but it is surely gross presumption on our part to say that they have not enough, by God's pleasure, to effect their salvation. If any man believes that in his sect is to be found the truth *unadulterated*, and that in the rest some truth *may* exist, but much error,—are there not, in all the other sects combined, men of equal ability and greater numbers who would say the contrary?

Strange to say, however, there are—as I hope to show—a number of grains of truth which all sects alike possess *and all alike are agreed on*, and these grains of truth are none other than the *unadulterated moral teachings of Christ*.

Probably no Christian sect exists which does not teach and profess to believe in the simple precepts taught by Christ, which we have examined and classified in Part I. of this work, under the head of the *Practical Teachings of Christ*, and summarised under five heads in *Salvation According to Christ* (*ante* p. 98); whilst probably not two of the whole Christian sects are agreed on those teachings of Christ and his Apostles, which I have classified on p. 58, *ante*, under the head of *Doctrinal Teachings of Christ*, and afterwards summarised on p. 99, *ante*. However—not to anticipate the conclusions come to hereafter—let us proceed to consider Christianity as we find it in the leading Christian sects of to-day, and in doing so, I shall give the place of honour to the Church of England, as being the Established religion of this country.

Christianity according to the Church of England.

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England contained in the Book of Common Prayer, we are told, were “agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, and the whole clergy, in the Convocation holden at London in the year 1562, for the avoiding of diversities of opinion and for the establishing of consent touching *true religion*.”

Here follows the King's Declaration, wherein it is proclaimed that the Thirty-nine Articles “do contain *the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's Word*; which we do therefore ratify and confirm, requiring *all our*

loving subjects to continue in the uniform profession thereof, and prohibiting the least difference from the said Articles."

Again, in another part of this Declaration, it is once more repeated—touching these doctrines—that "from them we will not endure any varying or departing in the least degree." The King declares himself to be the "Supreme Governor of the Church of England," and, as such, claims the right to require implicit obedience to these Articles, requiring that no man "shall put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of any Article, but shall take it in the *literal and grammatical sense*."

It is impossible, nor is it necessary, to give these well-known Articles at length. I will merely draw the reader's attention to a concise summary of what they declare to be "the true doctrine of the Church of England."

Article 1. The Trinity.

„ 2. Christ's Divinity and the Atonement: "*To reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.*"

Article 4. His Resurrection and Ascension.

„ 5. The Holy Ghost.

„ 6. Holy Scripture: "Whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, *is not to be required of any man*, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be *thought necessary to salvation.*"

If the reader will turn back to Chapter X., page 134, where I have treated of the doctrines taught by Christ, he will see that the conclusions there come to are entirely against the necessity of believing these doctrines as a *sine quâ non* to salvation. What Christ did require of those who wish to be saved, I have already sum-

marised, *ante* p. 98. The doctrines of the Trinity, the Resurrection, Christ's Divinity, and the Atonement, I have admitted to be *taught* by Christ, but not "required of us to be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought necessary to salvation." Article 6 would in itself seem, therefore, to stultify all the Thirty-nine Articles, which "cannot be proved by Holy Scripture." I have in vain searched the New Testament for proof that we must, under penalty of eternal punishment, believe in the Trinity, the Atonement, the Resurrection of Christ, the Holy Ghost, or even Christ's Divinity; but, for the reasons already explained, I fail to see that the belief in these doctrines is required of us as needful to salvation. I therefore, in the words of Article 6, conclude that, inasmuch as the saving efficacy of these doctrines cannot be proved from Christ's words in Holy Scripture, they are not required to be believed as necessary to salvation.

Article 7. The moral commandments of Moses are obligatory on us, but not those touching rites and ceremonies.

If salvation, as the Apostle Peter says (Acts 4 : 12 ; and as the 18th Article of the Church also admits) is *only attainable through Christ* and none other, we are only bound to observe Christ's commands, and so far as he certainly did endorse the commands of Moses (see p. 32, *ante*) we may give heed to them, but, beyond this, it would seem clearly that the Old Testament cannot be of *vital* importance to us.

Article 8. The Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Apostles' Creed, "ought *thoroughly to be received and believed.*"

As this Article virtually incorporates these three creeds, let us see what they contain.

The Apostles' Creed expresses a belief in God, in Christ as his Son, his conception by the Holy Ghost, his resurrection from the dead and ascent into heaven, the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

The Athanasian Creed expresses that *unless men believe in the following doctrines, "without doubt they shall perish everlastingly"*:—Belief in God, the Holy Ghost, the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the Atonement, his Resurrection; and finally, that at Christ's second coming "all men shall rise again *with their bodies*: and shall give an account of their *works*; and they that have *done good* shall go into life everlasting; and they that have *done evil* into everlasting fire."

The Nicene Creed substantially re-echoes the Apostles' Creed; but, after speaking of Christ's Divinity, says of him, "*by whom all things were made.*" The Holy Ghost is also alluded to as "the Lord and Giver of life"—"who, with the Father and the Son together, is worshipped and glorified." Lastly, this creed contains, in addition to the Apostles' Creed, "I acknowledge *one baptism for the remission of sins.*"

Firstly, we find that the first and the third creed do not expressly say that it is *necessary to believe these creeds* in order to be saved, whereas the Athanasian creed most emphatically does so. Since, however, they are incorporated into the Thirty-nine Articles, the obvious inference is, that this Church thinks them necessary to salvation, since none who disbelieve any of the Thirty-nine Articles can be considered Churchmen, in view of the emphatic declaration that "they are *agreeable to God's Word*," and that they contain the *true doctrine* of the Church of England. If it be contended that men can please themselves about accepting any particular doctrine or article of belief, then where are we to

draw the line? Dissenters and Unitarians would be at once admitted as entitled to salvation, and the value of being a Churchman is lost at once. Either the Articles are indispensably necessary to salvation, or they are not. If not, then why not publish the fact? since no greater blessing to mankind could be bestowed on us than the removal of unnecessary barriers to the harmony and unity of our fellow-countrymen. When we consider how emphatically the Church has declared it essential that Churchmen should adhere "literally and grammatically" to these Articles, it is certainly astonishing how many men in the Church—both laymen and priests—diverge from the principles there laid down. They give a nominal adherence to the Church's teachings, but few of the laity have ever read the Thirty-nine Articles, or thought about their meaning. No doubt it is a subject for congratulation—rather than the reverse—to find that so many Churchmen are superior to their creeds, and that they refuse to believe in their hearts that any honest man will "perish everlastingly" for not believing in the doctrines contained in the Athanasian Creed; but, at the same time, it is truly deplorable that these men should be so indifferent to the spread of "peace on earth and goodwill toward men," and of that charity and love to one another which Christ preached, that they will not exert themselves sufficiently to pull down a barrier which keeps out of the Church thousands of fellow-Christians, and thereby promotes jealousy, persecution, and ill-will—the very evils it is their duty as followers of Christ to remove. It is little less than hypocrisy for Churchmen to take credit for the liberality and hospitality of their Church when they persist in retaining over the door of their house a notice threatening with eternal damnation all who do not believe as they do; and yet scores of people, who go regularly to Church every Sunday, will tell you privately that they do not believe in everlasting punishment for Catholics or Dissenters, or, indeed,

for any man who does his duty to his neighbour, and is inwardly a good man. Publicly they sanction and adhere to these principles by standing up for their Church and for a creed which in private they are not ashamed to admit their disbelief in! They know full well that the published creed of their Church—the Athanasian creed especially—is an offence and an insult to the common sense and religious feelings of thousands of their fellow-countrymen; and notwithstanding that they themselves do not believe the creed in its “literal and grammatical sense,” and are aware that the excision of these irrelevant and useless doctrines would produce harmony and unity amongst thousands of men and women both in and out of the Church, they lack the moral courage to take steps for removing the cause of these evils. The boasted liberality of the Church reminds one of the man who offers the hand of friendship with one hand, whilst with the other he clutches a loaded pistol.

The cause of this state of things may be a lack of moral courage, or it may be owing to another cause, which certainly seems the more probable of the two—namely, indifference. Were the majority of church-people really true Christians—eager searchers for the truth, and anxious to promote that charity and goodwill amongst mankind which their great Teacher insisted on—is it likely they would be so indifferent to the continuance of barriers which privately they admit to be needless and valueless? Which-ever answer the reader may give to these questions, I fail to see how he can prove that Churchmen are true followers of Christ. If he holds that the Thirty-nine Articles and the Athanasian Creed *are* necessary to salvation and must not be deviated from, then he must put an interpretation on *Salvation according to Christ* very different to what I have been able to arrive at, and he must necessarily admit that all Roman Catholics, Unitarians, Jews, and other dissenters from those Articles, will “perish everlastingly” because of their inability to accept these doctrines!

I have in Chapter X., *ante* p. 134, tried to regard certain doctrinal teachings of Christ as mere statements of *fact*, which Christ did not insist on our believing as a *sine quâ non* to salvation, and which, therefore, some may believe—if they find comfort in them—and others may reject, without in the slightest degree affecting the right and duty of each to live the life of a true Christian in obedience to those vital precepts which Christ *did* require of us, and on which all sects *are* agreed. If modern Christians only recognised the reasonableness of this, all doctrinal creeds would be abolished henceforth, and mountains of hatred, prejudice, and discord, would be removed from society. Different creeds might still be adhered to by those who had a veneration for them; but if one and all publicly admitted that they were *not necessary to salvation* we should all agree to differ, and a man would no more think of finding fault with his neighbour because the latter—as a matter of taste—preferred to attend a place of worship where doctrines were countenanced rather than one where they were abjured, than he would think of quarrelling with him for furnishing his house in a different style to other men.

If the reader will glance over the three creeds confirmed by Article 3 in the light of the conclusions come to on p. 101, *ante*, regarding the essentials to *Salvation according to Christ*, he will see that they bristle with points of doctrine which Christ never *insisted* on, and virtually *ignore entirely almost all that Christ did insist on as necessary to salvation!*

Not a word is said about repentance of sins, without which forgiveness is impossible. The Apostles' Creed professes a belief in "the forgiveness of sins," and the Nicene Creed simply says, "I acknowledge one *baptism* for the remission of sins," thereby leading us to believe that *repentance*, which Christ emphatically insisted on as a preliminary to the *new birth* within, is a matter of no importance what-

ever, but that the outward ceremony of baptism is the one thing needful !

Neither of these creeds contain any such expressions as, "I believe that he who will be saved must, before all things, become pure in heart as a little child; must love God, repent truly of his sins, and cultivate an inward spirit of love and charity towards others; also self-sacrifice, forbearance, humility, &c., doing good according to his means." These are the vital points of Christ's teachings—all else is merely the outer husk. Almost all Christian sects admit it, yet none have sufficient courage to reject the outer shell and keep the kernel!

The Athanasian Creed, which is the most emphatic of all upon the necessity of believing, contains little else but an incomprehensible jumble about the Trinity, concluding, however, by the most practical but contradictory assurance that those will be saved who have *done good*, and those will be consigned to everlasting fire who have *done evil*! It certainly sounds strangely inconsistent to say, in one breath, that salvation depends on belief in the Trinity, and in the next to announce that salvation depends on *doing good*.

As I have already shown elsewhere that merely doing good (excepting from a good *motive*) can be no criterion of a man's merits in the eyes of God; and as I have also endeavoured to show that Christ never required of us any such belief as that here insisted on, but did require of those who wished to be saved a great deal which the creed of St. Athanasius entirely ignores, it is hardly necessary to say that, like the other two creeds, I consider this one entirely unsanctioned by Christ, and therefore *useless* and *unchristian*.

In reverting to the Thirty-nine Articles, we next come to

Article 9, which declares that Original Sin "is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, . . . and

"therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

I need say no more on the subject of this doctrine than refer the reader to the observations already made on it, *ante* p. 149, where I concluded that the doctrine is a libel on the Creator, that it is not taught by Christ, and is of no vital importance.

Article 10. Free Will: "We have no *power* to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ *preventing* us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."

It is difficult to know what these words mean, but certainly Christ nowhere teaches such a doctrine.* If it were true, the practical effect of it would be to make God responsible for all the sins we commit, and to render his punishment of mankind the climax of cruelty and injustice. Is it conceivable that God would deprive men of the *power to do good*, and then punish them for not possessing that power!

Article 11. "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and *not for our own works or deservings*."

Article 12. "Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, *cannot put*

* Bishop Burnet, out of all Christ's sayings, can only find one short sentence, extracted from Christ's valedictory discourse addressed to his disciples, descriptive of the abiding union between himself and his disciples: "Without me ye can do nothing." It is impossible to twist these words from their obvious meaning, in relation to the future ministry of the disciples, into a general expression of God's relationship to mankind at large, as expressed in the foregoing Article.

away our sins," . . . yet "by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit."

Article 13. Works done not of faith in Christ "are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they *have the nature of sin.*"

The practical meaning of the three foregoing Articles, when put into plain English, seems to be, that no men but those who have faith in Christ are good men or can do anything pleasing to God, and that even those who *have* faith do not mend their prospects by doing good, since it "cannot put away their sins," but merely give external proof of their faith. Hence *believers need not necessarily be doers*, whilst *none but believers can possibly be saved*. To show how strangely these words contradict the very words of Christ, I need only again remind the reader of the texts, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" or "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father." Strange to say, the Thirty-nine Articles do not hold out the hope of salvation even for those who never heard of Christ, viz., the heathen; although all Christians, if questioned, say "the heathen are a law unto themselves." The Thirty-nine Articles, however, contain no such doctrine, which, affecting as it does the salvation of a far larger number of people than all the whole Christian population of the world amount to, is certainly an extraordinary omission, since it is obviously a matter of the highest moment and ought to have been included. As, therefore, no divergence from these published doctrines is permitted, it would seem that the Church of England—in her Articles at least—regards as hopelessly lost all who have not heard of Christ or do not entertain that faith in him which is required by the creed. All good men in every part of the world—India, China, and elsewhere—who have

never heard of Christ, and who yet have believed in God, and prayed to God, and done deeds of beneficence, besides living peacefully and charitably one with another, are by the Church of England denounced as incapable of salvation and unable to do anything pleasing to the Almighty; in fact, their very goodness is pronounced "to have the nature of sin"!

The charges of cruelty and injustice against the Almighty, which the iteration of these preposterous and uncharitable doctrines undoubtedly implies, are so obvious, that it is not too much to say that they fall little short of blasphemy. I have already considered the probabilities of salvation according to the New Testament for the heathen (p. 92 *ante*), and for the unbeliever (p. 94, *ante*), and I can only refer the reader to those observations as applicable to the Articles in question. As it is inconceivable that a merciful God would condemn to eternal torment those who have never heard of the salvation offered to them, so I also conclude that—whatever the apostles may say to the contrary—it is equally inconceivable that eternal punishment can be the lot of the man who conscientiously feels himself unable to accept the doctrines of Christ's Divinity and the Atonement, but who does his duty to his fellow-men and cultivates within him that spirit of charity, forbearance, and self-sacrifice, which Christ taught as needful to salvation. Moreover, it is also opposed to the words of Christ in St. Matt. 25, where he alludes to his Second Coming, and the explicit promise of salvation for those who have done deeds of beneficence to the poor (see *ante* p. 40).

In the present criticism upon the Christianity of the Church of England, I have endeavoured to put a "literal and grammatical" sense upon the words used, and that sense seems to me to imply, that outside the Christian faith none will be saved. The Athanasian Creed is alone sufficient to prove this, even if the Articles 11, 12, 13, 18, and 31, were not strong enough to convey such a meaning.

One difficulty we meet with in criticising the theology of the Church is, that no one seems to know exactly what the Church does and what it does not teach. One meets with Churchmen who hold the most liberal views, and who, if challenged, will tell you they do not believe the vital points of the Church's creed, much less in that of St. Athanasius; and as to the Articles, they regard them as propositions which do not concern them at all. I have shown, later on, that some clergymen of the Church of England are exceedingly narrow and bigoted—threatening eternal damnation to dissenters and infidels alike; whilst others, like the Bishop of Manchester, are as liberal and as superior to the published creed of the Church as one could wish them to be. Under these circumstances, I have felt justified in taking the Church's Articles of Belief as the true Christianity taught by the Church of England, and putting my own construction on their language as the interpretation of an ordinary layman. I doubt not that interpretation will be different to what many Churchmen would adopt, and although it may be the "literal and grammatical" meaning of the words, yet they are doubtless capable of other interpretations. In many cases the obvious meaning of the words is found to be too harsh for the present day, and it is therefore toned down and explained away until there is little that is objectionable left. It cannot, however, be expected of ordinary Churchmen that they should read all the voluminous expositions that have been published of the Church's Articles. We find the Articles in our prayer books in all their native harshness without comment or explanation, and as such I have criticised them. If they do not mean what the literal and grammatical sense of the words suggest, why do not Churchmen revise them, and draw up a set of Articles which ordinary laymen can understand, but which will not outrage the feelings of their fellow-Christians? The answer is of course obvious. Churchmen are too much divided against themselves to agree upon anything.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye have love one to another,” is one of the tests of true Christianity which Churchmen would do well to take to heart.

Although some Christian sects do interpret the Scriptures as harshly as the Articles of the Church seem to me to do, it is only fair to point out that Bishop Burnet, in his *Exposition of the Articles*, is disposed to make the following distinction touching the damnation threatened to unbelievers in the doctrines of Christ. He admits that, as regards the heathen, the Church is not warranted by Scripture in expressing an opinion; whilst as regards the honest doubter,* or as he perhaps would prefer to call him—the infidel—the Church is decidedly of opinion that he is excluded from salvation.

Bishop Burnet seems fully aware of the arguments that may be urged in opposition to the doctrine that men can only be saved by faith in Christ. Says he—“Others having observed that it was a very small part of mankind that had the advantages of the Christian religion, have thought it too cruel to damn in their thoughts all those who have not heard of it, and yet have lived morally and virtuously according to their light and education. And some, to make themselves and others easy in accommodating their religion to their secular interests, to excuse their changing, and to quiet their consciences, have set up this notion, that seems to have a largeness both of good-nature and charity in it, looks plausible, and is calculated to take in the greatest numbers; they, therefore, suppose that God, in His infinite goodness, will accept equally the services that all His creatures offer to Him, according to the best of their skill and strength.” Bishop Burnet finds himself in a difficulty. On the one hand there is the text that there is “only the

* In criticising (*ante* p. 92 and p. 94) the texts of the New Testament which refer to the fate of those outside Christianity, I have made some comments upon the case of the heathen and the honest doubter.

name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved;" and, on the other hand, there is St. Paul's admission that faith comes by hearing, and his question, "How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" The Bishop proceeds to draw sundry fine distinctions between the use of the words "*saved by the law*" and "*saved in the law*," which I need not set out. The result is that he admits "a great difference between those who are out of the promise of salvation, to whom the tidings of it were never brought, and those who have been invited to this covenant, and admitted to the outward profession and the common privileges of it, and that yet have in effect rejected it; *these are under such positive denunciations of wrath and judgment, that there is no room left for any charitable thoughts or hopes concerning them*;" so that if any part of the gospel is true, that must be also true, that they are under condemnation for having loved darkness more than light, when the light shone upon them and visited them." As to the heathen, he admits that although "they have no federal right to be saved," neither can we "take it upon us to damn them." Whether any of them will be saved "is more than we can determine, and it is a vain attempt for us to endeavour to find out."

Were those unfortunate persons about whose faith the Church of England's Articles are silent, but an insignificant minority, one would not be so much surprised at this ignorance on the part of those who claim to be the true followers of Christ—the elect of God's children; but when we find that those, about whose fate we are told the Almighty has not revealed His intentions, are in a majority of three to one, and number no less than nine hundred millions of the world's population, it is surely presumptuous for Christians to set themselves up as possessing any exclusive knowledge of God's will. The admission, in fact, seems to me to constitute one of the strongest arguments *against* the inspiration of the Scrip-

tures, or against the Church's doctrine, that faith in Christ is the only ground of salvation. To suppose that the Almighty would deliberately ignore three-fourths of His creatures, and offer special facilities for Salvation to the minority, leaving the rest to grope their way as well as they could, and that too in the face of the doctrine that "sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man," is so preposterous that no thinking man can credit it for a moment.

I have given abundant extracts (*ante* p. 89) to prove that "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," so that further discussion on the subject is here needless. I use Bishop Burnet's admission of the Church's ignorance touching the fate of the heathen as an argument against the exclusive claims of our Church, or any other Church, to be the sole interpreters of God's truth. It is a curious commentary on the Bishop's admission that such men will be judged by the "seeds of knowledge and virtue laid in the nature of man" (see Rom. 2 : 12, 14, 15), that modern Christians display so much anxiety about the souls of these same heathen, and are so anxious to convert them. Since there are (according to the Church) only two alternatives for a man after death, viz., heaven or hell, it would seem that the law which God has "written in their hearts," as St. Paul expresses it, and by which he says they are to be judged, would be quite as efficacious in procuring their salvation as anything we can tell them. If it be admitted that God reveals Himself to them, He can certainly save them without our aid. If, like the Catholics, we admitted that, after death, there were a hope of further progress in a state of purgatory, we should have some logical ground for seeking to aid the heathen, since it might be argued that, although their own consciences would suffice to secure them from perdition, yet the superior advantages of Christianity would expedite their progress in the next world.

It is, however, the fate which the Church holds out to unbelievers in our midst that we have most to find fault with, since Bishop Burnet admits that Christians (unlike Christ) can have no room "for any charitable thoughts or hopes" towards them, *since "they have loved darkness more than light."* Here, I venture to say, is a gross perversion of truth, to begin with. The unbeliever, whom I have distinguished by the name of *the honest doubter* (so as to exclude selfish, worldly-minded men, who never trouble themselves about religion at all), is, in nine cases out of ten, a man who loves light more than darkness, and it is owing to his special anxiety to find out the truth about religion that he has stumbled upon the fallacies and inconsistencies of the Church's creed, and been obliged to give it up in despair. It is altogether a wicked libel to characterise the man whose mind is so constituted, that what appears light to other men seems dark to him, as having a preference for darkness rather than light. It is no merit to believe. Some minds are so constituted that they are satisfied with proofs that other minds spontaneously reject. A shallow-minded, unthinking man very often accepts the whole creed, simply because his ancestors accepted it, and because men, much cleverer than himself have done the same. This is *proof* to him, and therefore he believes. Another man, like Mr. Greg, for example, is endowed by his Maker with a mind that *cannot* believe on grounds like these, and yet he is to be told by another that he is an infidel—*he loves darkness more than light!* As a matter of fact the reverse is the truth.

Having discussed what seems to me, from the Scriptures, to be *the law for the honest doubter* (*ante* p. 94), I need not here repeat any of those arguments.

Article 15. Christ alone without sin. All others "although baptized, and born again in Christ," are not free from sin.

Article 16. Repentance for sins committed after baptism, and forgiveness to such as truly repent.

Article 17. Before the foundation of the world God "constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation."

Having already treated of the doctrine of Election and Predestination elsewhere (*ante* p. 142), I need only refer the reader to what I have already said. The whole doctrine is utterly repugnant to our conception of an Almighty Father or of any responsibility in man, and could only tend to make utterly miserable all *true* Christians—that is, those who are unselfish enough to take an interest in the happiness of their fellow-men. The knowledge that a large proportion of those around us, to whom we are bound, perhaps, by ties of love, have been *specially created* and *predestined by the Almighty to sin*, and then to suffer eternal torments for so sinning, must inevitably mar our own happiness instead of "being so full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons," as this obnoxious Article proceeds to declare.

Article 18. They are to be "accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved."

The foregoing Article expresses precisely those views which it has been the whole tenour and purport of my criticisms on the *Christianity of Christ*, contained in Part I. of this work, to controvert. If the reader has read those arguments, he will not need any further refutation here of

the monstrous doctrine which this Article involves. I venture to think that five Churchmen out of ten, if not more, would unhesitatingly repudiate it when its full meaning is put before them. If it means anything at all, it signifies neither more nor less than this: That all Roman Catholics, Jews, Unitarians, Mahommedans, Buddhists, Parsees, and also all Materialists, Positivists, and millions of good men in China, Japan, and India—be their lives as pure and peaceful as they may, or be their opportunities for leading a higher life never so few and far between—must be eternally punished by a merciful God—the same who, we are told in Luke, is “kind unto the unthankful and to the evil;” and in Timothy, “will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

Article 20. The Church may not “so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another,” and beside what is in the Scripture, it “ought not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation.”

This Article is plausible; and, if the remaining Articles did not contradict it—as witness all that have preceded it, when read in the light of Christ’s teachings—doubtless it would be by no means the least valuable of them all. Certainly, if the salvation offered by the Thirty-nine Articles is not altogether repugnant to my exposition of the salvation offered by Christ, and if I have not satisfied the reader that many doctrines are advanced by these Articles—and the creeds incorporated with them—as necessary to salvation, which Jesus nowhere so pronounced, then I have signally failed in my purpose.

Article 22. The Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping, Adoration, &c., is “repugnant to the Word of God.”

This article is an express declaration of dissent from the interpretation which the Roman Catholic Church—comprising about twelve times as many Christians as the Church of England—conscientiously puts upon certain passages of Scripture. On what grounds our small minority of Christians presumes to differ in its interpretation of the Word of God on these points, from the majority, is not quite clear. Who shall presume to say what is the Word of God and what is not? Certainly our Church would seem to have a very large mote in its own eye which requires looking to, before we presume to say that our interpretation of the Word of God is infallible.

Article 25. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper declared to be "witnesses and effectual signs of grace."

This Article does not declare it necessary for salvation for any man to partake of the Lord's Supper or be baptized, but evidently regards them as signs only.

Article 27. Baptism is "a sign of regeneration or new birth," . . . "the promises of the forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are *visibly signed and sealed*; faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God."

The whole tenour of this Article seems to imply that Baptism is optional, since it does not declare that forgiveness of sins is unattainable *without* this outward sign of it.

Article 28. The Lord's Supper declared to be a "Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death."

Here also there is nothing requiring a compulsory observance of the Lord's Supper.

Article 31. "The Offering of Christ once made is that *perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world*, both original and actual; and there is *none other satisfaction for sin but that alone.*"

This is merely a repetition, in another form, of the old doctrine, that none can or will be saved except through Christ. This Article, at first glance, says in effect, that there is now no punishable sin in the world at all, since it is all atoned for! The question arises—Does it refer to sins committed by all men who lived before Christ's death or since? Obviously it relates to sins committed *afterwards*, and therefore to all sins we have ever committed, or at any future time may commit; since, were it not so, it could not concern us. As, however, it is in the 18th Article expressed that no one will be saved but believers in Christ, *i.e.*, no sins will be forgiven, excepting the sins of those who believe in Christ's atonement,—how is it possible to reconcile the present Article with the former? The former, in effect, says that all Jews, Unitarians, Freethinkers, and heathen, will be eternally lost; and Article 13 declares their good deeds even are *sinful*, whilst the present Article distinctly affirms that Christ has made a "perfect propitiation for the sins of the *whole world* (!), *both original and actual*," and therefore leaves us to infer, that although the Almighty has thus received a perfect satisfaction for *their* sins, as well as for ours, yet He will punish them all the same! Again, Article 9 told us that original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, and therefore all persons born into the world deserve God's wrath and damnation; whilst the present Article declares that Christ's death was a perfect propitiation for this same original sin! If so, why are we "deserving of God's wrath and damnation?" If Christ has satisfied the Almighty, where is the justice of threatening us with punishment?

Comparing this Article with the teachings of Christ, who

emphatically declares that salvation is only to be attained by *obedience to his commands*, it seems by far the safest course to conclude that, whether this doctrine be true or not—and it is highly unlikely to be so—it is a matter, the belief in which, we have Christ's authority for asserting, does not affect our chances of salvation in the least degree. Whether he did or did not make propitiation for our sins, he tells us none the less plainly that we must *repent*, and lead a new life; that a new birth must take place within us; and that there must dwell love, charity, forbearance, forgiveness, and beneficence. His propitiation or redemption in no way dispenses with the necessity of repentance for wrong done, or the necessity of the inward change which he everywhere insisted on as a *sine quâ non* to salvation. Better, therefore, by far, is it to rely on Christ's word in preference to all the Thirty-nine Articles put together!

Again, if it be argued that the belief in Christ's atonement does not profess to dispense with the necessity of the inward changes alluded to, and merely operates in favour of those who first *do* repent and lead a new life, and not until then, we are left in the old difficulty: "What is to become of those who have not heard of Christ?" since St. Paul admits that faith comes of hearing, and "how can they believe who have not heard" (see *ante* p. 90). The present Article only makes the cruelty and injustice of their fate all the worse, since we are told that Christ "made perfect propitiation and satisfaction *for all the sins of the whole world!*" If their want of faith is owing to no fault of their own, and if all their sins are already atoned for, where is the justice and mercy in punishing them?

Article 37. The laws may punish offenders with death.
Christian men may serve in wars.

Article 38. Almsgiving according to ability enjoined.

„ 39. Swearing before a magistrate "in a cause of faith and charity" permissible.

This concludes a short epitome of the Thirty-nine Articles. It is needless to set them out at greater length. How far Articles 37 and 39 agree with the teachings of Christ, I leave the reader to judge for himself by referring back to p. 34 and p. 76, *ante*. The reader can now compare the general tenour of the Articles of the Church of England with the summary of *the Religion of Jesus*, contained in the first Part of the present work. The most striking fact which they present to my mind is—

That *they systematically ignore the only vital part of Christ's teachings—i.e., the practical part—and persistently dwell upon those points of doctrine which I have endeavoured to show Christ nowhere required our adherence to as a sine quâ non to salvation!* There is not so much as a hint that salvation according to Christ requires the cultivation, above all things, of love to God and man; charity, forgiveness, forbearance, self-sacrifice, and beneficence! In the only Articles that allude to doing good the tendency is to decry good works as of no consequence. In short, *belief in doctrine* is everywhere thrust forward as *the one thing needful*, whereas Christ nowhere insisted on it.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Common Prayer-Book.

HAVING now considered the principles of the Church's Christianity, let us turn our attention to the public worship of the Church of England as repeated each Sunday in thousands of churches all over the land.

To begin with. It cannot be denied that the Book of Common Prayer contains many prayers of extreme beauty, framed in language which appeals to our highest emotions, and which are worthy of the greatest praise. Notwithstanding this, there is very much which the reader, who has imbued himself with the full meaning of the true religion of Jesus, cannot fail to regard with feelings of abhorrence; and were it not that so many men go to church from mere habit, and rarely, if ever, bestow much thought on the real significance of the phrases they are called upon to stand up and give utterance to or tacitly assent to, it would be incredible that sensible Englishmen of the present day could be found to sit out the Church's service.

To begin with, I find, however, that the very first words which strike the ear of the worshipper on entering the church are so admirable and so true that we can hardly express our admiration for them too strongly. Where in the whole Thirty-nine Articles shall we find anything so beautiful and true, and yet—be it said—so utterly at variance with the whole of the doctrines contained in those Articles, as the following:—

“When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.”

(Ezek. 18 : 27.)

Here is a passage which is publicly read up by every clergyman in the land twice every Sunday, and yet it is utterly heterodox and unsanctioned by modern Christianity! *Salvation by repentance and well-doing, irrespective of creeds or faith.* Surely it is too good to be true! One seems to doubt the evidence of one's senses; yet there it is in plain English.

The prayers which follow are so comforting and beautiful that I should be sorry to find any fault with them. The Apostle's creed has then to be repeated by the whole congregation, unless it be one of the days on which the creed of St. Athanasius is required to be read, and then the latter is repeated or sung by the whole congregation. The remarks made on the latter (*ante* p. 167) need not be here repeated. Those who can honestly believe the contents of this creed are not to be envied. Those who repeat it, or lend their sanction to it by belonging to a Church which incorporates it in its Articles and yet do *not* believe it, are, in my humble opinion, either wanting in moral courage—in not protesting against the mockery of religion which the retention and repetition of this creed involves—or they are such lukewarm Christians that they take too little interest in the service to trouble themselves about its meaning.

In the prayer preceding the Communion service, the congregation are required to beseech the Almighty to grant that “by the merits and death of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all Thy Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion;” and in the priest's exhortation the doctrine of *Salvation by faith only* is further insisted on in alluding to Christ's “*meritorious Cross and passion, whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven.*” Let the reader compare this with the words of Christ when, in reply to the scribe who addressed to him the words, “To love God and to love his neighbour as himself is more than all whole burnt offerings

and sacrifices," Jesus said unto him, "*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*" See also the words, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and the whole tenour of Christ's teaching, which clearly teaches no salvation by faith only.

In the service connected with the public baptism of infants we find original sin and natural depravity once more to the fore: "Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are *conceived and born in sin*, and that our Saviour Christ saith none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerated and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost," &c. The priest then proceeds to pray to the Almighty that he will mercifully wash the child and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, that he "being delivered from thy wrath" may be received into the ark of Christ's Church, &c. Then comes another prayer that the infant, "coming to the holy baptism, may *receive remission of his sins* by spiritual regeneration." As to the statement that "all men are conceived and born in sin," I wonder what mother who fondles her first-born child—all purity and innocence—really believes in her heart that it is conceived and born in sin and deserving of God's wrath, &c. ! Probably not one in a thousand but would reject with abhorrence such a foul libel. It is inconceivable how sensible men and women can patiently go through a ceremony where solemn nonsense like this is given utterance to. The repetition of such words is really little short of blasphemy to the Creator, considering that in another part of the service the congregation is asked to sing from the Psalms such phrases as the following:—

"But thou, O Lord God, art full of compassion and mercy;
long suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth."
(Psalm 86 : 15.)

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, and his
mercy endureth for ever."
(Psalm 106 : 1.)

"Gracious is the Lord and righteous: yea our God is merciful."
(Psalm 116 : 5.)

"The Lord is loving unto every man: and his mercy is over all his works."
(Psalm 145 : 9.)

At the conclusion of the Baptismal service occurs this soothing passage:—

"It is certain by God's Word, *that children which are baptized*, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved."

Are we then to infer that those children who are *not baptized* will be eternally lost? If not, what is the good of baptism?

In any case, it is utterly repugnant to the love Christ expressed for little children when he said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," as it is also utterly inconsistent with Divine mercy and justice to believe any such doctrine. Having already enlarged upon this subject elsewhere (see *ante* p. 149), I need say no more here than to point out that if children are conceived in sin and deserving of God's wrath, and if (as the 17th Article expresses it) God has, "before the foundation of the world," predestined that a select few, "whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind," should be delivered from curse and damnation, it is surely wonderful that any parent, who cares for his child's soul, will take the awful responsibility of bringing children into the world, seeing that he can have no certain assurance that any particular child of his will be one of the elect!

It is idle to say that Churchmen can go to church, and yet disbelieve these doctrines. The Church service requires them to repeat aloud such passages as the following from the 51st Psalm:—

"Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath my mother conceived me."

And every man who utters such words must surely be held

responsible for them, or else he admits that he is degrading the religious worship to a solemn farce.

Although the Church service is in many respects admirable, and contains prayers and songs of great beauty, it cannot be denied that sensible men and women are expected to repeat words which are self-contradictory and almost blasphemous in their teachings, and which certainly are a disgrace to the Church as an expounder, above all things, of the Religion of Jesus.

I have already quoted several extracts from the Psalms which represent God to be merciful, forgiving, and long-suffering. There are many others to the same effect:—

“The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and of great goodness.”

(Psalm 103 : 8; also 145 : 8.)

“O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious: because his mercy endureth for ever.” (Psalm 118 : 1.)

“O praise the Lord, all ye heathen: praise him, all ye nations. For his merciful kindness is ever more and more towards us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.” (Psalm 117 : 1.)

“The Lord upholdeth all such as fall: and lifteth up all those that are down.” (Psalm 145 : 14.)

“Arise, O God, and judge thou the earth: for *thou shalt take all heathen to thine inheritance.*” (Psalm 82 : 8.)

These extracts are all from the Old Testament, and represent God as a merciful Father, *even to the extent of granting salvation to the heathen!* The reader has already had abundant extracts from the New Testament to the same effect, and he knows, too, that Christ—sent from God—taught above all else mercy, forgiveness, and forbearance. With these facts before him, I ask, how can any conscientious Christian—who cares enough about religion to think upon the meaning of the words he utters—attend the service of the Church of England Sunday after Sunday, and repeat such passages in the Psalms as I have here culled for the perusal of the reader?

- "I will follow upon mine enemies, and overtake them: neither will I turn again till *I have destroyed them*. I will smite them, that they shall not be able to stand: but fall under my feet. Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou shalt throw down mine enemies under me. Thou hast made mine enemies also to turn their backs upon me: *and I shall destroy them that hate me.*" (Psalm 18 : 37.)
- "They shall cry, but there shall be none to help them: yea, *even unto the Lord shall they cry, but he shall not hear them. I will beat them as small as the dust before the wind*: I will cast them out as the clay in the streets." (Psalm 18 : 41.)
- "As for the ungodly, they shall perish; and *the enemies of the Lord shall consume as the fat of lambs*: yea, even as the smoke, shall they consume away." (Psalm 37 : 20.)
- "*Mine enemies speak evil of me: When shall he die, and his name perish?* . . . Let the sentence of guiltiness proceed against him: and now that he lieth, *let him rise up no more.*" (Psalm 41 : 5.)
- "*They lie in the hell like sheep*, death gnaweth upon them, and *the righteous shall have domination over them* in the morning: their beauty shall consume in the sepulchre out of their dwelling." (Psalm 49 : 14.)
- "Behold, God is my helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: *destroy thou them in thy truth.*" (Psalm 54 : 4.)
- "Let death come hastily upon them, *and let them go down quick into hell*: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them. . . . *As for me, I will call upon God: and the Lord shall save me.*" (Psalm 55 : 16.)
- "The ungodly are froward, even from their mother's womb: as soon as they are born, they go astray, and speak lies. They are as venomous as the poison of a serpent: even like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears; which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer: charm he never so wisely. *Break their teeth, O God, in their mouths*; smite the jaw-bones of the lions, O Lord: let them fall away like water that runneth apace; and when they shoot their arrows let them be rooted out. *Let them consume away like a snail*, and be like the untimely fruit of a woman: and *let them*

not see the sun. Or ever your pots be made hot with thorns: so let indignation vex him, even as a thing that is raw. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly.* So that a man shall say, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous: doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth.*" (Psalm 58 : 3-10.)

"Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away: and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God." (Psalm 68 : 2.)

"The Lord hath said, I will bring my people again, as I did from Basan: mine own will I bring again, as I did sometime from the deep of the sea. That *thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies*: and that the tongue of thy dogs may be red through the same." (Psalm 68 : 22.)

"Let their" (mine adversaries) "table be made a snare to take themselves withal: and let the things that should have been for their wealth be unto them an occasion of falling. *Let their eyes be blinded, that they see not: and ever bow down their backs.* Pour out thine indignation upon them: and let thy wrathful displeasure take hold of them. Let their habitation be void: and no man to dwell in their tents. . . . *Let them fall from one wickedness to another: and not come into thy righteousness.* Let them be wiped out of the book of the living: and not be written among the righteous." (Psalm 69 : 23.)

"Set thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When sentence is given upon him, let him be condemned: and let his prayer be turned into sin. Let his days be few: and let another take his office. *Let his children be fatherless: and his wife a widow. Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread: let them seek it also out of desolate places.* Let the extortioner consume all that he hath: and let the stranger spoil his labour. *Let there be no man to pity him: nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children. Let his posterity be destroyed: and in the next generation let his name be clean put out. . . . Let it thus happen from the Lord unto mine enemies:* and to those that speak evil against my soul. But deal thou with me, O Lord God, according unto thy name: *for sweet is thy mercy!*"

(Psalm 109 : 5-13 and 19, 20.)

"Wilt thou not slay the wicked, O God: depart from me, ye blood-thirsty men. For they speak unrighteously against thee: and thine enemies take thy Name in vain. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee: and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? Yea, I hate them right sore: even as though they were mine enemies.*" (Psalm 139 : 19.)

"Let the mischief of their own lips fall upon the head of them that compass me about. *Let hot burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire, and into the pit, that they never rise up again.*" (Psalm 140 : 9.)

"*And of thy goodness slay mine enemies: and destroy all them that vex my soul; for I am thy servant.*" (Psalm 143 : 12.)*

Probably every one who has gone through the foregoing extracts will be disposed to admit that, however beautiful some of the psalms and portions of psalms may be, there are amongst them a large number of passages which—if applied by any man now-a-days to his fellow-men—would be regarded as fiendish and repulsive, and imbued with sentiments that are as widely opposed to every Christian principle as the poles. In short, these psalms are thoroughly unchristian, and should either be excluded from the Prayer-Book or considerably altered in form. It is incomprehensible how so many good and sensible men and women can calmly listen to or repeat these expressions, Sunday after Sunday, without a murmur of dissent; and the only inference really seems to be, that they go to church as a matter of habit and never trouble themselves to think about the meaning of the words they give utterance to. In any case, the fact is deplorable, and it says little for the Christianity of the clergy or of Churchmen that they are too supine to take the trouble to reform

* In addition to the foregoing extracts there are many others, which want of space forbids me to add; but I may give the following references among others:—Psalms 5 : 11; 21 : 8, 10; 37 : 39; 53 : 3-4; 55 : 24; 63 : 10, 11; 79 : 11, 18; 83 : 17; 92 : 7, 23; 97 : 3; 101 : 11; 104 : 35.

a service which, in its present form, is not only opposed to Christ's teachings, but directly tends to keep good men away from the service of the Church, and indirectly engenders sectarianism, prejudice, and ill-will.

In concluding this notice of Christianity according to the Church of England, it is only fair to add, that as the Church is inconsistent in allowing the introduction into its service of expressions from the Old Testament that are thoroughly evil in their influence upon the minds of the hearers, by reason of their being opposed to the Christianity taught by Christ, so also is the Church quite as inconsistent in allowing the introduction of other extracts that are directly opposed to the principles of the Church itself, as expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles.

What can be more truly liberal and beautiful than the following psalm? or what can be more opposed to the doctrines of Salvation by Faith in Christ only, or the necessity of belief in the Trinity, in Baptismal Regeneration, or in Christ's Divinity? Again, what can be more truly in harmony with the Salvation according to Christ as explained in the foregoing pages—benevolence exemplified by beneficence—than these words?—

MORNING PRAYER.

Psalm xv. *Domine, quis habitabit?*

“Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle: or who shall rest upon thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life: and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart. He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour: and hath not slandered his neighbour. He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes: and maketh much of them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth unto his neighbour, and disappointeth him not: though it were to his own hindrance. He that hath not given his money upon usury: nor taken reward against the innocent. Whoso doeth these things shall never fall.”

The objectionable parts of the psalms are not the only portions of the Church service which are calculated to disgust men with the form of worship contained in the Prayer-Book. The congregation is also expected to listen to the perusal of chapters from the Old Testament, many of which have no more bearing upon the lives and concerns of the listeners than the laws of China or Japan. It is impossible to give many extracts in support of these statements, since they are far too voluminous, and would necessitate the transcript of one-half of the Old Testament. Let the reader turn to the "Proper Lessons" for the day contained in the Common Prayer-Book, and he will find abundant proof of what I have said. Certain portions are interesting from an historical point of view, but others are quite the reverse, and are simply wearisome to listen to. Other portions, again, depict the Almighty breathing the same vengeful, tyrannical spirit which the psalms express, and are equally unchristian and untrue.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."
(Gen. 19.)

Again, in the Morning Lessons appointed to be read in the Church of England for the sixth Sunday in Lent and for Easter Day, where we are told in Exodus 10, 12, and 14, that the Lord repeatedly "hardened Pharaoh's heart" so that he would not let the people of Israel go, and then proceeded to punish not only Pharaoh, but the innocent Egyptians by all manner of terrible plagues, concluding with the destruction of the first-born:—

"And it came to pass, that at midnight *the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt*, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on the throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead."

Then we read that, by the aid of the Lord, the Israelites robbed the Egyptians of their jewels and raiment and departed; after which the Lord said,

“I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, that he shall follow them.
*. . . And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh,
 King of Egypt,* and he pursued after the children of Israel.”

Then came the crossing of the Red Sea, whereupon

“*The Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.*
 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots,
 and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that
 came into the sea after them: there remained not so
 much as one of them.”

See also Num. 16, where we are told God spake unto Moses—

“Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment.”

“And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for *there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun.*”

After Aaron had “put on incense, and made atonement for the people,” the plague was stayed; and we are told that “they that died in the plague were 14,700.”

Again, see Num. 25—

“And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and *the anger of the Lord* was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, *Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord* against the sun, that the *fierce anger of the Lord* may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, *Slay ye every one his men* that were joined unto Baal-peor.”

After describing the slaughter of a man of Israel and a Midianitish woman by one Phinehas, the narrative proceeds to say—

“So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were 24,000. And

the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas
hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel,
. . . . that I consumed not the children of Israel in my
jealousy."

See also Deut. 7, where the Lord directs Moses to "*utterly destroy*" the nations in the land he goes to possess and "make no covenant with them, *nor shew mercy unto them.*"

"And *thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them.*"

Again, Deut. 9 contains the following :—

"Understand therefore this day that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee, *as a consuming fire he shall destroy them*, and he shall bring them down before thy face; so shalt thou drive them out, and *destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee.*"

In Deut. 13, God is described as authorising the slaying and stoning of "thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, if they entice thee to serve other gods." "*Thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die,*" &c.

In Joshua 10, we read of God as discomfiting the Amonites before Israel, and "the Lord slew them with a great slaughter:" . . . and "the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died." . . . "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, *until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.*"

"And Joshua smote all the country of the hills and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, *but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded.*"

In 1 Samuel 15, we read that Saul was anointed by the Lord "to be king over his people, over Israel."

"Now, therefore, hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.*

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep."

Thus commanded, we read, later on, that Saul "utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword." Also, in the same chapter, we are told that Samuel "*hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.*"

I think the reader will agree with me, that it is needless to repeat these painful extracts. They could be easily multiplied if necessary. Sufficient has surely been given to satisfy any one *that these words are not the words of God*; that the God of the Israelites was simply a creation of their own brain; they attributed to the Almighty feelings of anger and hate, exemplified by acts of pitiless vengeance and wholesale slaughter, which Christ has taught us our Almighty Father certainly does not and cannot possibly possess. The whole of these narratives are an insult to our feelings as Christians, and little less than blasphemous towards our Creator, and it is surely high time that the Christians of to-day ceased to sanction, by their tacit assent, the public expression of sentiments so utterly at variance with the principles which they profess. Where Christ—whom the Church professes to accept as the Son of God, and equal with God—teaches love to mankind, peace, forbearance, forgiveness, and charity, these proper Lessons of the day, appointed to be publicly read up in all our churches throughout the year, breathe hatred, vengeance, slaughter, rapine, and cruelty! Surely no one can conscientiously defend the evident inconsistency of even quietly listening to such objectionable teachings—to say nothing of giving tacit assent to them. As before stated, it would seem only possible to understand the inconsistency on the ungracious assumption that modern Christians pay little or no attention to the service, and go to Church more from habit than a sincere desire to worship God.

The retention of these objectionable parts of the Church service is not merely culpable in this respect, but also as a hindrance to the unity and harmony which might dwell amongst modern Christians were these superfluous and objectionable doctrines and passages of Scripture removed from the service, since at present they only serve as barriers to the entrance of many thousands of our fellow Christians into the folds of the Church.

One useful lesson we can, however, learn from these extracts :—namely, that all nations paint the Creator according to their lights; and, since the Jews were obviously in error in their conception of the Deity, so may the heathen nations of to-day—and perhaps we also in some of our ideas of “God’s wrath,” “eternal punishment,” &c., be yet far from the whole truth.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sermons, Tracts, and Hymns.

IT would hardly be a fair criticism of the Church service to omit giving a few specimens of the usual style of sermon in which, as most people know only too well, the congregation is compelled to listen to long-winded dissertations upon abstruse points of doctrine, or some ancient Jewish rite of no possible interest to mankind of to-day. As one writer remarked some time ago, "The clergy tell us a great deal about what took place on the banks of the Jordan 1000 years ago, but they tell us very little of what takes place on the banks of the Thames in the present day."

Surely it cannot be for want of interesting topics upon which to discourse that the clergy persistently ignore the practical teachings of Christ and his Apostles and their adaptation to the needs of to-day, and persist in giving us doctrinal dissertations upon the efficacy of the Atonement, or the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, or the nature of God's wrath and its future consequences, &c. Never was there a time when the temptations of the world around us presented greater subjects for exhortation and good advice to those who find it hard to reconcile the precepts of Christ with the usages of the world. Neither can it be for want of examples of what a sermon should be, for the reader has only to turn back to p. 35 and to p. 43 to see that both Christ and his disciples brought their truths home to the hearts and minds of their hearers by illustrations from almost every conceivable relationship and situa-

tion in life, and failed not to denounce what was sinful in the face of those who sinned most. The clergy of to-day do not, it is only too well known, follow this example. They lack the courage to denounce the selfishness, extravagance, business dishonesty, or worldliness, of those who sit at their feet, and so they content themselves with keeping before the minds of their listeners the sacraments of the Church as the one thing needful to salvation. If I have succeeded in satisfying the reader that salvation according to Christ involves obedience to a practical rule of life which we must bring to bear on every act and thought of our earthly careers, surely it is not too much to say, that those who fail to point this out to their followers, and who pander to the apathy of their listeners instead of rousing them to a sense of their danger, must be traitors to the cause they are called upon to advocate.

I have before me a volume of specimen sermons, entitled, "Plain Preaching for a Year,"* in which are collected sermons by about a score of clergymen of the Church of England. These sermons, if anything, must therefore be considered above the average, and, indeed, are better than most of those one hears in the church. Some few of them contain sound practical advice, and have the true ring about them, but others are full of doctrine and contain barely a single crumb of the true bread of life. My intention is not to hold up this collection in particular as specimens of what sermons ought not to be, but rather to extract from them specimens of the average kind of discourse which is droned out every Sunday to apathetic congregations in thousands of English churches. The reader will doubtless at once recognise the style of exhortation he is so familiar with. If he has patience to read through the following extracts, I wish him particularly to compare them with the *practical* exhortations

* London: Skeffington.

of Christ and his apostles. Let him glance at the sound nourishment of the latter and then compare it with the dry husks of these extracts. Those portions which I would especially call the reader's attention to, I have taken the liberty of placing in italics. After what has been already said, it is needless to comment further on these specimens of Clerical Christianity. The reader will, I trust, be able to see their worthlessness without any help from me.

EXAMPLE I.

(*From a Sermon by Rev. W. Walsham How, M.A., Rector of Whittington, Hon. Canon of St. Asaph, and Rural Dean. Subject: The Sun and Moon standing still.* Text: *Joshua 10: 12.*)

The world rolls on, year after year passes by, and still the sound of battle surges up as we listen. Still must Israel fight and pursue ere it shall be said that her warfare is accomplished. And still the Sun shines on in the sky, and still the Moon reflects his noontide rays. Still is the light of the world fixed on high, hasting not to go down till the warfare be ended, and the last enemy subdued. Still is the Church lit with his divine radiance, and shedding forth on the world the reflection of his glory. God hath spoken to the only begotten Son of His eternal love, and said, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Still shall the Sun shine on; still shall the Moon ride calmly in the heavens till God's great purposes are accomplished, and he who rose victoriously over death this day shall *smite down his foes beneath his footstool.* On, then, Christian warriors! Your Captain marches before you! He has come forth from the chamber of death to lead you on to victory! He is the Prince of Life, and death shall not claim you as his captives. The battle-day is long. There is no day like it, before it or after it; for the Lord fighteth for Israel. Up, and strike one valiant blow for God and for the kingdom. Force back the enemy from the land of your inheritance. When at last the day is over, and "destructions are come to a perpetual end," and the Sun sinks below the horizon, and the Moon shines not in the sky, then there is rest for the weary soldier, and a crown in the kingdom of his Lord!

EXAMPLE II.

(From a Sermon by Rev. J. B. Wilkinson, Senior Assistant Priest of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, upon "Christ, the First Fruits of the Harvest." Text: *Leviticus 23: 9-12.*)

And, lastly, Jesus Christ our Lord, also is rightly called the First Fruits, because he is a sample and pledge of other fruits: Jesus Christ is rightly so called "The First," as being the choicest and best. He was offered and solemnly dedicated for us as at a harvest festival. He offers himself as a man, as the second man indeed, in so far as he came upon earth after Adam, the first man in point of time, but still he is "The First" by reason of his excellency. He is the First Fruits of all the human race, and as such he offered himself to the Eternal Father as a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour. Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, but yet inferior to the Father as touching his manhood. He gathers up in himself all excellencies and all virtues, all the attributes of perfection, which go to make up one perfect whole, and he offers these in his perfect humanity, as included in his person, as the "First Fruits" to God the Father: he offers them as a sample harvest sheaf to the Eternal Father: he goes before to offer them.

The forerunner has entered within the veil. The First Fruits has been offered once for all, and yet he is ceaselessly being offered. The sheaf has been waved, but yet it is ever waving, waving on, waving ever, until we are waved with him, when the angel reapers gather us in also.

I cannot conclude better than in the words of St. Ephræm. "Blessed," says St. Ephræm, "is the shepherd that became a lamb for our reconciliation! Blessed the branch that did become the cup of our redemption! Blessed be the cluster become the fount of the medicine of life! Blessed also be the tiller that became wheat, that he might be sown, and a sheaf that he might be cut down!" . . . His fruit was mingled with us men, that in him we might come nigh to him who condescended to us. By the fruit of his stem he grafted us into his tree, that we might bring fruit unto him. Let us praise him that prevailed and quickened us by his stripes. Praise we him that took away the curse by his thorns: praise we him that put death to death by his dying, who, by his resurrection, became "The First Fruits" of them that slept. . . . "Every man in his own order, Christ the First Fruits: afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." As the sheaves of Joseph's brethren bowed down before his sheaf, so we must take our bent from him. Jesus Christ stands in the centre as the sheaf of "The First Fruits," as it were, to be

attracted by us. *We are to incline towards him; we are to bow before and worship and adore him.** We are so to unite ourselves to him that we may become as one with him, that all we do be done by him in us, all we say may be said by him—by us all we think may be by his inspiration. We are but grains of wheat; he is the accepted sheaf.

EXAMPLE III.

(*From a Sermon by Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A., Rector of Beverstone, Gloucestershire. Subject: "Waiting upon the Lord for Refreshment and Strength."*)

Text : Isa. 40 : 30, 31.—"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Thus it is, then, brethren, with those who have the God of Israel—of His new-created chosen people—for their help. But, then, what is this "waiting upon the Lord" by which their strength is thus renewed? When the Israelites were set free from their enemies and from the danger before them, God did work by a special miracle: and so it was afterwards when, during all their forty years' wandering in the wilderness, they had abundance of food and water, though little could be found naturally in those desert places; and during all that forty years, too, neither their shoes nor their clothing ever wore out, though usually they would have been gone in forty weeks. In all this special preservation and strengthening of His people Israel, God worked by miracles,—a wonderful thing was done in their behalf over and above the ordinary course of nature. But when God promises to strengthen and refresh the spirits of those who wait on Him in this day, does he mean that they will see some wonderful thing done for their sakes different from what is done for others, and that so they will overcome their spiritual difficulties, and walk without faintness on the road to heaven? Look in your Prayer-Book, brethren, and see what is said in the latter part of the Catechism. The last question but one is, "What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?—that is, by the Lord's Supper. And the first part of the answer is, "The strengthening and refreshing of our souls." You see, then, that there is at least some likeness between the words used in the Prayer-Book to explain the good which we get from the Holy Communion and those used in the

* Where did Christ teach this? Rather did he not teach us to pray to "Our Father" in heaven. See also the extracts, p. 66, *Worship of Christ*.

Bible, which speak of renewing strength in such a manner that those who are thus strengthened and refreshed shall be able to mount upwards towards heaven, and to "go forward" in the way of eternal life.

And even if there was nothing else to do so, this would teach us to look for some connection between the words of our text and the blessed sacrament. Instead, therefore, of expecting some miracle to be worked by God in the conversion and sanctification of Christians, to enable them to go forward on the way to heaven, we may rather look to that way (wonderful indeed) pointed out to us by the Catechism in the Prayer-Book, and believe that he does this by means of the sacrament of the Holy Communion.

And, now, go back to what I said at first, that a parable of this kind is easily understood in its fulness, if you once get to understand its first and chief meaning—to have a key, as we say, to its interpretation. *Understand the texts to refer prophetically to the Lord's Supper, and you will easily understand a great deal more (!).* "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount upon wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." To wait upon the Lord is to come to God for that which He only can give us—a renewal of spiritual strength. *And to come to God thus is not anything of mere thought or meditation, but a really doing something. And the something* which is to be done—thus to come to God—is to take that from His hands—or from the hands of those He makes His ministers and appoints to do this work, for He himself does not make Himself seen or heard or known by any of our senses—to take that from the hands of His ministers, which is "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls."* As, then, *the meaning of the words, "they that wait on the Lord" is plainly "they who come to the table of the Lord and there receive the 'blessed sacrament'" (!),* so the next words mean that which I have said of them, that by receiving that spiritual food Christians renew the strength already given to them by God in their baptism: by receiving that hidden manna they are sustained even in the wilderness; by receiving that bread of life they can "go forward" according to the command of God, though without it they would be weak and quite unfit for the long march; *by receiving that body and blood of Christ they can mount upon wings of divine love, reaching heavenwards through the bread of heaven.*

It is therefore plain, brethren, that God shows us in these words of prophecy, that *the way by which a Christian is to be spiritually*

* Not a word about beneficence or obedience to Christ's teaching. Compare it with Matt. 26, Christ's second coming.

*nourished, spiritually refreshed and strengthened, is by receiving the blessed sacrament.**

EXAMPLE IV.

(From a Sermon by Rev. J. B. Wilkinson, B.A., Senior Assistant Priest of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge. Subject: False Christs. Text: St. Matt. 24: 24.)

But there, nevertheless, is the warning. And it is a warning given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ himself—"There *shall* be false Christs." And that which he who is the truth forewarns, like that which "he who is the faithful one promises, *must* come to pass"—"There *shall* be false Christs."

Moreover, this is a warning especially given to those who "think" they "stand," in order that they should "take heed lest they fall." It was given even to the very elect. It was given to the Apostles, those especially chosen of Christ our Lord. It was given to them "privately" as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, and Jesus began his last warnings to them, but three days before his crucifixion, and said, "Take heed that no man deceive you: for many shall come and say, I am Christ, and shall deceive many;" and further on, at the 11th verse, "Many false prophets shall rise and deceive many;" and then more fully in the words which precede and contain our text—"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there: believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

The warning comes also to us, my brethren, whom God has chosen, whom God the Holy Ghost has sanctified in our baptism. It comes to us, who are by His great mercy and love, and of His own free grace, the chosen of God,—to us who are made very members of the Christ of God in baptism, and fed with his most precious body and blood in the blessed sacrament, in the Holy Communion. "Behold," he seems to say to us as he said of old to his own Apostles, "I have told you before," I have forewarned you. Your soul—dear, infinitely dear as it is to God—is at the same time the one possession which the devil covets, the one to gain which he will exert all his wiles, all his cunning, all his power, all his malice, all his craft, all his subtlety. Prince of Pride as he is, he will stoop never so low if he can but conquer it. To gain that soul of yours he can and will become as it suits him best, or rather as it suits you best, a roaring lion, or a crawling

* Let any reader compare this teaching with that of Christ, and ask himself whether this is not a deliberate perversion of the teaching of Jesus.

serpent—a “false Christ!” He will hold out a false flag of truce, and under cover of it will treacherously try to attack and destroy you. He will lull you into a sense of security, and then be upon you. He will, as the psalmist says, “lay his hands upon such as be at peace with him and brake his covenant.” “The words of his mouth” may be “softer than butter,” but he has “war in his heart.” His words “may be smoother than oil, and yet be they very swords. What some of those terrible signs and wonders of the last day will be, we know by our blessed Lord’s own words. There will be the darkening of the sun. There will be the failing of the light of the gentle moon. There will be the falling of the stars. There will be the shaking of the powers of heaven. There will be the Cross, the “sign of the Son of Man,” shining in the heavens; that Cross, a sign indeed of our redemption, but a “sign” then also of wrath and of terror to the ungodly and to unbelievers as the instrument by which the sins of men put to death the Redeemer of mankind. But if, “when these things begin to come to pass,” we have held to the true faith, to the true Christ, even then we may “lift up” our “heads and look up” for our redemption when our Redeemer draws nigh. Yes, then will come the great Epiphany, the great Manifestation, the great appearance of our Lord Christ. Then, as the Apostle says, “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. Then will also our Epiphany, our own Manifestation,—not as what we appear to be to others, or even what we appear to be to ourselves (if we now deceive ourselves), but as what we are—shall also take place. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” It is not yet manifest. “But we know when he shall appear;” when that second great Epiphany takes place, “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” . . .

This true light must shine in us so that not only we should “walk in light,” but that others may be led by our light. We have not this light of ourselves, or of our own learning or wisdom or cleverness, but it is the light which God has given us in and through His Church. It is the light with which He illuminated us in our *Baptism* as the Father of Lights! It is the light which he caused to burn in us still more brightly and steadily when He established us with the Holy Spirit of light and love and strength in our *Confirmation*! It is the light by which he keeps alive and feeds us, in giving us the precious food of our souls, the Light of lights, himself, in the *blessed sacrament* of the body and blood of the true Christ, the one Christ, God and Man!

Yes, thank God! we belong, *through no merit of our own, but by His choice of us*, to that body of which he is the Head: I mean the Church of Christ. In our very Catechism we have over and

over again acknowledged and proclaimed this great and happy truth, when we said we were by baptism made members of Christ," and gave thanks, each one of us in our own individual self, that he hath sanctified "me and all the elect people of God."

So long, then, as we keep to the teaching of the Church, "the witness and keeper of Holy Writ," the guide to, and the pillar and ground of the truth, so long are we in the right way. She is the light set on a hill which cannot be hid. She is the body of which not only is Christ the head, but which is indwelt by the Holy Ghost. So long as we keep close to the teachings of the Church, so long shall we be close to Christ, so long shall we be secure from the temptations of *false Christs and false systems of religion, or rationalism, or infidelity, or dissent (!), or heresy, or schism (!).** *All these are works of the false Christ, the man of sin, the son of Perdition, who shall be revealed on that day, before which there shall first "come a falling away."*

Not only does the Church perpetually thrust doctrine to the fore on Sundays in the Church service, but also in the wide-spread publications of Tract Societies do we find the same blindness to Christ's teachings displayed. I have before me a collection of forty-three texts for public display, published by the Dublin Tract Repository, which will serve as a good sample of this kind of publication. Out of the whole forty-three texts I do not find more than three which, by any device, can be construed into having any practical bearing upon every-day life in the sense in which the most valuable truths of Christ and his Apostles were uttered. Every one knows the favourite texts of these Tract Societies. We see them hung up in railway stations, and thrust upon us in various forms by well-meaning fanatics.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

"The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin."

"Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

* Where is there more schism than in the Church of England or than amongst modern Christians generally? If schism is a sign of diabolical agency, modern Christians are far indeed from the kingdom of heaven.

- "What must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."*
- "All that believe are justified from all things."*
- "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*
- "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

The foregoing are a few specimens culled from the collection before me, and sufficiently illustrate what I have said, that those who profess to be so anxious to publish abroad the glorious teachings of Christ are either culpably ignorant of what salvation through Christ really means, or they are determined to delude themselves and others into the belief that a good life and pure thoughts are not of so much consequence as doctrinal creeds.

Where do we find exhibited such texts as the following, and why is it that we never see them used by the Church? Can it be that, by reducing Christianity to a system of moral teaching, the Church fears people will get to heaven without ecclesiastical assistance?

- "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."*
- "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."*
- "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."*
- "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*
- "The kingdom of God is within you."*
- "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."*
- "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."*
- "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*
- "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."*

So also Psalm 15 (quoted on p. 194), every line of which would form a valuable text.

Were it desirable, I could fill volumes with specimens of the noxious trash which Tract Societies and others send forth in the name of Christianity. At the depôt where the foregoing texts were on sale a small pamphlet was handed to me, which professes to have had a circulation of 35,000 copies, and is entitled the "BLOOD OF THE LAMB," and truly a more sanguinary production it would be difficult to find. It is scarcely conceivable that anyone conversant with the spirit of Christ's teachings could deliberately sit down and write such a pernicious perversion of the truth as this and similar publications contain. This is how the writer begins, and the same strain is maintained throughout:—

"I have no foundation of hope but in the *atoning blood* of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour.'

"There is nothing precious but the precious *blood* of Christ. I am standing on his blood. There is no foundation but the Rock of Ages.'

"The sure foundation of my hope is in my Saviour's blood.'

"These are three out of numberless testimonies of departing saints as to the ground of their confidence in the immediate prospect of standing in the presence of the infinitely holy God. In all ages there has been but this one resting-place for the sinner —*the blood*.

"Salvation in Jesus only, and by his atoning blood, is the one theme of Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation it runs like a scarlet thread through the whole, and every page tells out the grand, sublime, and soul-saving truth, that 'without shedding of blood is no remission.'

"Christ crucified is the entire burden of the word of God," &c.

This precious production concludes with the following characteristic verses:—

"The blood of Christ alone can cleanse,
And *purge away sin's stain*; *
Unless he blotteth out, the spots
Indelibly remain.

"The blood of Christ alone can pay
The *fallen sinner's debt*;
He has atoned for all man's sin,
The claims of justice met.

* These italics are not mine.

"The blood of Christ alone can save
From *never-ending woe*;
On him then let your trust be stayed,
To him for pardon go.

"The blood of Christ alone can turn
The *crimson-dyed to wool*;
No one but he can cancel guilt,
None cure the leprous soul.

"Then let us praise and magnify
The *precious, precious blood*
Of him who by his death has made
A living way to God.

J. E. H."

"THE ATONING BLOOD.

"It is the blood, it is the blood,
Which has atonement made;
It is the blood which once for all
Our ransom price has paid.

"It was the blood, the mark of blood,
The people's houses bore;
And when that mark by God was seen,
His angel passed the door.

" 'I see the blood, I see the blood,'
A voice from heaven cries;
The soul that owns this token true,
And trusts it, never dies.

A. M. HULL."

It is needless to make any more comments upon this melancholy picture of modern Christianity than to ask the reader to compare it with the words of him whom these writers blindly imagine they are serving.

The Church's Hymns are likewise open to considerable criticism in the light of Christ's teachings. I append a few extracts from the *Church Hymns*, published by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which are extensively used in our churches. It will be seen that in the hymns, as in the sermons, is there the same mistaken preference for the doctrinal teachings of the Apostles rather than Christ's own words, which I have elsewhere commented on.

The Resurrection.

No. 247, verse 6.—" 'Earth to earth and dust to dust;
Calmly now the words we say;

Leaving him to sleep in trust
 Till the Resurrection day.*
 Father, in thy gracious keeping
 Leave me now Thy servant sleeping."

No. 522, verse 1.—"They whose course on earth is o'er,
 Think they of their brethren more?
 They before the throne who bow,
 Feel they for their brethren now?"

Everlasting Punishment and Election.

No. 355, verse 15.—"With Thy favoured sheep, oh place me,
 Nor among the goats abase me;
 But to Thy right hand upraise me."

16 "While the wicked are confounded,
 Doomed to flames of woe unbounded,
 Call me, with Thy saints surrounded."

The Atonement.

No. 527, verse 4.—"By Thy dying we were brought,
 Ransomed from the world and sin."

No. 544, verse 4.—"And His the Blood that can for all atone,
 And set me faultless there before the Throne."

No. 547, verse 2.—"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
 Save in the death of Christ my God!
 All the vain things that charm me most,
 I sacrifice them to His Blood."

No. 558, verse 4.—"Nor alms, nor deeds that I have done
 Can for a single sin atone;
 To Calvary alone I flee;
 O God be merciful to me!

No. 577, verse 3.—"He died that we might be forgiven,
 He died to make us good;
 That we might go at last to heaven,
 Saved by his precious blood."

* A comparison of this and the following verse illustrates curiously the Church's ignorance of the conditions of the future life. In one, our departed friends are represented as "sleeping in trust," whilst in the other they are represented as already before the throne of God!

CHAPTER XV.

Christianity according to the Church of Rome.

HAVING considered very fully the Christianity of the Church of England, numbering only fifteen millions out of the three hundred and fifty millions of Christians in the world, I propose shortly to notice the other leading subdivisions of modern Christianity in order to see whether any others come nearer to the true Christianity of Christ, and if so, which of them approaches it the most closely. My space renders it impossible to enter into the differences of sects as fully as I have done in regard to the creed of the Church of England. More than a bare outline of their various creeds I cannot find room for, but enough will be given to answer the purpose in view.

Like the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that salvation is to be attained only through a belief in the following doctrines:—

Belief in God; in Christ's Divinity, his conception by the Holy Ghost, crucifixion, resurrection, and second coming; in the Holy Ghost; in one Catholic Church; in baptism for the remission of sins; in the resurrection of the dead, and in life everlasting.

So far, the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church are identical with those of the Church of England; but in addition to these doctrines, they believe many others which Protestants have since the Reformation repudiated. These may be summed up shortly as follows:—

In the exclusive right of the Catholic Church to interpret Scripture; in seven sacraments "instituted by

Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all for every one—to wit, baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, order, and matrimony :” * in original sin and justification, as defined by the Council of Trent ; that the mass is a “propitiatory sacrifice to God for the living and the dead;” in transubstantiation, *i.e.*, conversion of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the eucharist; and in “a purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful;” in the invocation of the Virgin Mary and the saints, and their intercession with God for us and in veneration of their relics; in retaining and duly honouring images of Christ, of the mother of God and other saints; in indulgences—*i.e.*, the remission, by Church authority, to a repentant sinner, of the *temporal* punishment which remains due after the sin and its eternal punishment have been remitted; in the superiority of the Roman Catholic Church over all others; in obedience to the Pope, “the Vicar of Jesus Christ;” in accepting all the other things declared by the Council of Trent, and in rejecting all heresies which the Church hath condemned; and finally, that “*no one can be saved*” out of this “*true Catholic faith*.” In addition to the foregoing, from the creed of Pius V., there are the doctrines of the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin Mary and the infallibility of the Pope, besides other points defined in the memorable *Syllabus* issued by Pope Pius IX. and the decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870.

The principal points of difference between the Church of England creed and that of the Roman Catholic Church

* These quotations are from the creed of Pius V.; see *Chambers's Encyclopedia*.

may be shortly stated to be, that Catholics, in addition to adopting all the false doctrines held by the English Church, hold, as necessary to salvation,

The sacraments; a belief in purgatory; the invocation of the Virgin Mary and saints; in the efficacy of indulgences; and the infallibility of the Pope.

There are numerous minor differences which swell the list before us into large dimensions. All the objections urged against the possibility of reconciling salvation according to the Church of England with the salvation offered by Christ apply, of course, with greater force to the complicated mass of doctrines which the Church of Rome thinks fit to call the teachings of Christ. We have only to look "on this picture and on that"—on the simple and intelligible precepts of Jesus, and compare them with the huge overgrown structure which has been erected on it by the hand of man, added to and strengthened by centuries of popes and councils, and we need hardly wonder that, from the eyes of humanity, true religion is completely buried and lost to view. No wonder that, with this immense weight of authority all pointing to the Christianity of Churches as the only road to salvation, mankind at large should at length have bowed the knee to sacerdotal teaching and forgotten to inquire whether, after all, *salvation is not to be had on easier terms from Christ himself*. For some, doubtless, it is easier; but, for others, much more difficult. Thoughtful, earnest men can much more easily accept and act up to the simple teachings of Christ—benevolence exemplified by beneficence and a lively faith in God—than they can swallow the indigestible compound offered to them by the Church of Rome or the Church of England in the name of Christ; but for men of the world who love self, and whose ambition is to acquire wealth and minister to their own gratification, doubtless the doctrines of the Church are very acceptable. The notion that a death-bed

repentance, a few sacraments, an indulgence purchased without a sacrifice, or the wholesale swallowing of doctrinal nostrums, will make them 'all right' for the next world, as well as for this, is sufficient to account for much of the preference for doctrine which seems to cling to "poor humanity." One might even conclude, that—although individual priests and clergymen are above suspicion of self-seeking—yet Churches, as a body, have been tempted, in course of time, deliberately to strengthen their power more and more by adding to, rather than weakening, the importance of doctrines and sacraments in the minds of their followers. These reflections give rise to the question, whether the adherents of the Church of Rome or the Church of England ever really put before themselves the true value of their doctrines in so crude a form as to ask, "Can it be possible that a belief or disbelief in this or that doctrine will make any real difference to our future destiny? and if not, what is the use of devoting so much attention to it, or wasting so many words in quarrelling about it?" In treating of Christianity according to Christ and according to the Church of England, I endeavoured to keep this question in view, and to answer it by showing that almost all the doctrinal teachings of Christ are of no vital importance whatever, since they are *nowhere required to be believed as indispensable requisites to salvation*; whereas Christ, again and again, points out in the most emphatic manner what he who wishes to be saved must do and must believe. Having summarised these teachings on p. 98 *ante*, it is needless to do more here than refer the reader to them. In answer, therefore, to the Church of Rome's claim to be entitled to express, in its dogmas, the terms on which Christ offered us salvation, I reply, that we have Christ's own authority for it *that salvation is offered on no such terms whatever, and therefore the whole scheme may be rejected as unworthy of our acceptance*. It cannot be argued that the Church has merely amplified the teachings of

Christ and does not deny the necessity of inner regeneration, a pure life, and observance of Christ's commands. This is doubtless true, but it has added thereto conditions—such as belief in papal infallibility, adherence to the Romish faith, &c.—which virtually exclude from all hope of salvation the whole of the human race excepting its own adherents, which number only about one-seventh of the religious population of the globe. The Church of England has done the same; and, however liberal individual members of these Churches may be in their views towards non-believers, the retention of obnoxious doctrines which are of no vital importance to man's future salvation, helps to create and maintain sectarian animosity, and is consequently opposed to the first principles of Christianity.

It will doubtless be urged by some that, even if these sacraments and doctrines are not of vital importance to salvation, their retention can do no harm to those who think they may be dispensed with, whilst, on the other hand, many persons will prefer to retain them. Truly, there is perhaps no great harm in the observance of these sacraments and the belief in these doctrines—were that the only offence—but the real wickedness consists in not at once throwing down barriers which separate man and man, and produce so much misery in the world. It is solely because churches preach and fulminate dogmas, which threaten all other sects with eternal damnation, that the laity, influenced of course by their religious teachers, are led to regard one another with suspicion and dislike. Were it once taught and understood that sacraments and doctrinal beliefs are not regarded as indispensable, the number of those who would continue to observe and profess them would soon become surprisingly small. If we only regard salvation as a state of future happiness, as opposed to future misery, and that—as the Church of England teaches—there can be no change for the worse or better after death, but that “as the tree falls, so must it lie,”

then certain consequences ensue, which I have endeavoured to show (*ante* p. 132) must result in injustice; for where all the saved are, by the magical change of death, placed on an equality and admitted to equal happiness in heaven, there is no motive for self-sacrifice in this life, and our end and aim here below—as perhaps it is with many—should be merely to “save our own souls.” Compared with this belief the Romish doctrine of Purgatory seems much more reasonable—namely, that all men who may be saved are not necessarily perfect enough to be admitted immediately into the Divine presence, and must therefore undergo a stage of further progression after death, and that in this intermediate stage they may be benefited by the prayers of the living. Certainly, those who believe that our prayers can benefit our fellow-men still in the body, are scarcely consistent to deny that, after passing into the next life for further purification, they are thenceforth removed from those benefits. Be this as it may, there is no Scriptural authority in support of the Romish doctrine *that those who do not believe in such an intermediate state will be eternally lost*. Christ never offered salvation on such terms, nor did he teach the doctrine as optional of belief. If it be true, it is all the more consolatory to those who believe it; but our disbelief in it cannot make the slightest difference to our right of admission into that state, any more than that a doubt about the immortality of the soul will deprive us of a future life.

As regards the other points of difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome: to wit, the increased number of sacraments, it can be shown (as I endeavoured to do in the case of the English Church sacraments) that, if Christ ever taught or sanctioned them at all, he never made them indispensable, but optional.

In regard to the invocation of the Virgin Mary and the Saints, of what possible use can any such assistance be? and how can any disbelief in its efficacy render a man less

happy in the next life, so long as he believes that Christ taught men to pray directly to "Our Father which art in heaven," and that (as St. Peter tells us) "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands," but may be appealed to in all places and at all times. "When thou prayest," said Christ, "enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6 : 6).

In regard to the efficacy of Indulgences, this doctrine is so cunningly wrapped up in plausible explanations, that it appears innocent enough at first glance. There must be, first of all, a *sincere repentance*, says the Church, and this is exactly what Christ teaches also, only Christ offers salvation to the repentant sinner *without purchasing an indulgence*, though he does require a blameless life in the future. I have endeavoured to show elsewhere that no repentance can possibly be sincere which is not followed by a return to a better life, and *that* necessarily implies a wish to make compensation *to those we have injured*. Here, however, the wily Church of Rome steps in and says, "Make compensation to *me*, build a church, or perform a pilgrimage, and *I* will make all right with the Almighty (providing you have repented first)." In effect, this amounts simply to this: that those who are credulous enough to suppose they can never attain salvation excepting by permission of the Church, must necessarily dread those *temporal* punishments which the Church—quite independently of all Divine punishments—arrogates to itself the right to inflict, and be glad enough to obtain a respite from them on any terms the Church chooses to offer.

As regards the Infallibility of the Pope again, a comparison of Christ's teachings leads us to the conclusion that this, like all the other doctrines, is not a belief affecting in the slightest degree our future salvation. We are told that Christ intended to commit all things to Peter and his successors when he made use of the words (Matt.

16: 18), "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The Romish Church interprets this passage as giving absolute infallibility to every successor of St. Peter in matters *ex-cathedrà*; and as the successive Popes have built up the creed of their Church into the form in which it now stands, and of which I have given an epitome (on p. 214 *ante*), it follows that *belief in papal infallibility* involves absolute belief in all the other doctrines of the Church. If, therefore, I have succeeded in showing the reader that any one of these doctrines is inconsistent with the teachings of Christ, it is impossible to regard as infallible a man who decrees the contrary, since to do so would be to give preference to the teaching of Popes over that of Christ. As, however, Roman Catholics deny themselves the right to interpret Scripture, it is needless to say that, in presuming to put an independent interpretation upon any one of Christ's sayings, they would cease to be Catholics.

It is strange that, since Christ so explicitly requires of those who wish to be saved obedience to his precepts and *nothing more*, men should prefer to worry themselves about incomprehensible dogmas—touching which twenty different sects of Christians hold twenty different opinions—to say nothing of running the risk of possible error in their particular creed. Still more strange does this appear when we consider that all these Christian sects *are unanimous on the question of our obeying Christ's commands and leading his life*. About doctrine there are endless disputes. All are agreed on the necessity of living a Christian life, but each one seems to vie with the other which sect shall hamper Christ's teachings with the greatest number of doctrines! Surely, if truth is never divided against itself—and if there really

be wisdom in a multitude of counsellors—we need pause very little in arriving at the conclusion *that the truth and the wisdom are to be found in those teachings about which all are agreed*: and that, as Christ's own words are so clearly to the same effect, the sooner men throw away all doctrinal questions as useless, the better will it be for the world.

Christianity according to the Lutheran and Calvinist Churches.

The Lutheran Church numbers 30,700,000 members, and the Calvinistic Churches number 12,700,000 members, and both of them find their adherents on the continent of Europe.

As their creeds are substantially the same as those of the Church of England, excepting that Calvinism lays much more stress on the doctrines of Predestination and Election, and, as I have fully considered these doctrines in relation to the Church of England's Articles, it is needless to go over the same ground again. Like the Church of England and the Church of Rome, these Churches neglect the pure kernel of Christ's teachings, and quarrel about the outer husk.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Presbyterian Church.

THE creed of the Church of Scotland is contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which, excepting its leaning towards Calvinism, is—as regards points of doctrine—substantially the same as the Church of England.

It adheres to the following doctrines:—

A belief in the inspiration of Scripture; in *God*, who in Sec. 1 is credited with being “most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,” &c.; in the *Trinity*; in *Predestination* and *Election*, which are expressed as follows:—“By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.” The former “are predestinated unto life before the foundation of the world was laid,” “chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of God’s mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto, *and all to the praise of His glorious grace*” (!)* “Neither are any other redeemed by Christ effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.” “The rest of mankind God

* I have placed in italics certain passages which I call the reader’s attention to. They are so obviously false, in the light of Christ’s words, and so inconsistent with the before-mentioned attributes of God, that comment on them is needless.

was pleased to ordain to dishonour and wrath for their sin, *to the praise of His glorious justice*" (!)

Belief in the *Creation* and the *Fall of Man*—which latter consisted in our first parents eating the forbidden fruit. "This, their sin, God *was pleased*, according to His wise and holy counsel, *to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.*" "They, being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity," . . . "whereby we are utterly *indisposed, disabled*, and made opposite to all good, and *wholly inclined to all evil.*" "*Every sin, both original and actual*, being a transgression of the righteous law of God . . . brings guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal."

God's covenant with man, "whereby he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him."

Belief in Christ as the Son of God, and Mediator between God and man; his conception by the Holy Ghost, death, and resurrection, whereby he "fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased reconciliation for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." The efficacy of this redemption is "communicated unto the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world," . . . unto whom Christ reveals "in and by the Word the mysteries of salvation, *effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey.*"

Free-Will. "God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, *nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil.*" (!) Man by his fall "hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation, . . . being

altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin and not able by his own strength to convert himself."

Salvation for the Elect. "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life and those only" he is pleased to call. "Others not elected, . . . cannot be saved: *much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever*, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess."

Justification. God pardons the sins of those whom he calleth, "not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone;" not by faith or the act of believing, "but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them." Such "can never fall from the state of justification," yet may incur God's displeasure until they repent.

Repentance, although "not any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ, yet is of such necessity to all sinners that none may expect pardon without it." Persons also who have offended others are enjoined to declare their repentance and be reconciled.

Good Works, "done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith." "Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ." "We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life." "Works done by unregenerate men, even things which God commands and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith, . . . are sinful and cannot please God."

Prayer and Worship of God are enjoined.

Baptism, by sprinkling with water, and the *Lord's Supper*

are the only two sacraments recognised by the Presbyterians. Of the former it is said, "Although it be a great sin to neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated." The doctrine of Transubstantiation is rejected.

The Future Life. "The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately *return to God who gave them.* The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, *waiting for the full redemption of their bodies*; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. *Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.*" At the last day "the dead shall be raised up *with the self-same bodies and none other.*"

The day of Judgment. "The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the *glory of his mercy (!)* in the salvation of the elect, and of his *justice (!)* in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient."

The reader will observe that the chief characteristic of the Church of Scotland's creed is the peculiar emphasis it lays on the doctrines of Predestination and Election. The Church of England expresses very nearly the same views, but much more generally. Here, however, we have these abominable doctrines worked out with great minuteness, and the result is, to present to our minds a creed which contains within itself abundant evidence of its falsity.

What, for example, can be more blasphemous than to commence with a description of the Almighty as most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,—and then to charge Him with having, before the foundation of the world, *predestined* some of his creatures to everlasting glory *without any merit of their own* (“*all to the praise of his glorious grace*”), and *predestined* the rest of mankind “to dishonour and wrath for their sin, *to the praise of His glorious justice!*”

Man, we are told, is by no means responsible for his defects, for he inherits sin from his original parents, Adam and Eve, through whose disobedience, (which, we are told, “God was pleased to permit, *having purposed to order it to his own glory!*”) all subsequent generations are born into the world “*wholly inclined to evil*” and utterly “*indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good.*”

In spite of this inherent tendency to *evil*, we are told, in another section, man is “neither forced *nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil!*” Again, we are told God’s justice manifests itself in refusing salvation to all men, *be they ever so good* and whatever their religion, who are not *predestined* by Him to salvation.

Those who are thus specially selected before the foundation of the world are to have their sins pardoned—not through any merit of their own, but because Christ has atoned for them; and when the last day comes these elect ones will receive their reward “for the manifestation of the glory of God’s mercy,” whilst those whom he has thus predestined for damnation are, “for the manifestation of *His justice*,” to be cast into hell! It is difficult to see how any reasonable man can glance over the inconsistencies with which this atrocious creed abounds, without feeling that its existence is not only an insult to our understanding, but a libel on the Creator.

It is well to remark here, that in one of the articles of

this Confession of Faith the origin of each individual soul is admitted to be in God, since the souls of men, at death, "*immediately return to God who gave them.*" It is difficult to see, therefore, how so to construe this creed without charging the Creator with all the sin with which men are born into the world, and for which *some* will be punished and others pardoned.

NOTE.—It would appear that in Scotland, as in England, the Church in its creed professes one thing, whilst its ministers very often preach another. One of the ministers of the United Presbyterian Church, Rev. David Macrae, at a meeting of the Presbytery, so recently as January, 1877, made a manly and vigorous attack upon the Westminster Confession of Faith, in which he boldly charges the ministers of his Church with maintaining a dishonest relationship to these so-called Standards of their Faith. In demanding a revision of the Standards of his Church, he says, "I maintain that our relationship to these so-called Standards is not an honest one; that the professed is not the actual creed of the Church; that our Church is professing one creed, while holding, and to a large extent preaching, another. What is our profession? The theology of the Confession, which is declared to be an exhibition of what is believed and taught in our Scottish Churches. The Confession teaches that God, for his own glory, has predestinated some men to be saved, but that all the rest of mankind he has predestinated to damnation and everlasting torment in hell. It teaches that God has absolutely and unchangeably fixed the very number, so that not one of them can be brought over to the ranks of the saved, preach to them and pray for them as you will. It teaches that none are redeemed by Christ but the elect only. It teaches that the rest of mankind are not only unable to believe in Christ, and beyond his power to redeem, but are brought into the world by God utterly unable to help themselves. It teaches, indeed, that God hardens them, withholding the grace by which they might have been enlightened in their understanding and wrought upon in their hearts. It teaches that by reason of the sins of Adam, apart from any fault of their own, they come into the world wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body, utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil. It teaches that because of this sin, which they could not and cannot help, they are bound helplessly over to the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and so made subject to spiritual, temporal, and eternal death. It teaches that even in heathen lands, where they have never heard, and therefore have had no opportunity of accepting the gospel, they cannot be saved, no matter how earnestly they may frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess. It teaches that if they do wrong it is sin, and they are damned for it; if they turn to the one hand it is bad; if they turn to the other it is worse. If they obey the law of God it is sin; if they disobey it, it is worse sin. This is the doctrine of the Confession. Repent and turn to God it is declared they cannot. They cannot even make an effort that way; they are unchangeably predestinated to be damned. And after death, according to our Standards, they are all cast into hell, there to endure for ever and ever unspeakable torments, both of soul and body, as long as God himself shall exist. It teaches that of the countless myriads of babes who have died and are dying in infancy, only the elect are saved. For the non-elect, young or old, it has no fate but the unending and unspeakable torments of hell."

CHAPTER XVII.

Other Christian Sects.

Baptists.

OF Baptists there are several varieties—including the Congregational Baptists, the Union Baptists, the Particular Baptists, and the General Baptists.

Their creed is substantially the same as that of the Church of England touching the doctrines of modern Christianity, excepting that, like all Dissenters, they do not believe in the Apostolic Succession of the Church Clergy. In its own body it is, however, distinguished by all shades of belief upon disputed doctrines, like those of predestination and election—some holding the sufficiency of the atonement for *all men*, and others salvation for an elect number only. The particular tenet for which the Baptists are distinguished, however, is their opposition to infant baptism, and the baptism by immersion of adults. They regard baptism as an ordinance, the validity of which depends on an intelligent faith on the part of the recipient. They believe that none but believers in the Lord Jesus Christ can be baptized, and that it must be accompanied by a moral and spiritual change; and, as respects the mode, they hold that only immersion in water is baptism. The Baptists are also divided among themselves regarding communion—one portion throwing open the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and membership to conscientious Pædo-Baptists (*i.e.*, those who advocate infant baptism), and the other declining to admit any but Baptists. The Baptists, amongst the religions of the world, number no less than 2,439,000 members.

The Congregationalists or Independents

Form another large subdivision of modern Christians, who dissent from the doctrines of the Established Church. They number 1,445,000 members. Like the Baptists, they deny the spiritual authority of the Church, and hold that every Church is possessed of the power of self-government under its exalted head, Jesus Christ.

Doctrinally, the early Independents adhered in substance to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformers and the Thirty-nine Articles, but modern Congregationalists, whilst declining subscription to these Articles, and frankly tolerant of very considerable diversities of opinion, profess to be of one mind in regard to the cardinal truths of Christianity.

Their Declaration of Faith, as set out in the Congregational Year Book, sets forth certain *Principles of Religion*, which are substantially the same as those of the Church's Articles touching doctrines. They adhere to the inspiration of the Scriptures, and believe in one God, revealed in the Bible as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit co-equal; also in the Fall of Man; in original sin and natural depravity; "that God before the foundation of the world designed to redeem fallen man;" in Salvation through Christ; His divinity and atonement for our sins; in justification by faith, not works; in election; in a holy life and good works as the *necessary effect* of a true faith; in the life-long process of "sanctification of true Christians," and their immediate reception at death into the presence of Christ, freed from all remains of evil; also in Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and, finally, in the second coming of Christ, the judgment of the whole human race according to their works, the resurrection of the "bodies of the dead," and the division of the whole human race into the righteous and the wicked—the one to be rewarded with "life everlasting," and the other relegated to "everlasting punishment."

The Methodists

Form a numerous and influential body amongst the modern Christians, and are said to number 4,400,000. They also are split up into smaller subdivisions, who rejoice in the following titles:—The Wesleyan Methodists, the Primitive Methodists, the United Free Church Methodists, the New Connexion Methodists, the Congregational Methodists, the Independent Methodists, and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists.

The doctrines professed are similar to those of the Church of England, "their great distinguishing doctrine being the universality and freedom of the atonement; hence they reject the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination (which they conceive to be incompatible with the former); but while they maintain the freedom of the will and the responsibility of man, they also maintain his total fall in Adam, and his utter inability to recover himself."

They also maintain the perfectability of Christians, or rather the possibility of their entire sanctification as a privilege to be enjoyed in this life. "The Wesleyan Methodists in their religious services use more or less the English liturgy; the morning service being read in many of their chapels, and the sacramental offices being required in all." The Methodists also claim the right of self-government and decline to recognise any Divine authority in the Church of England.

The Society of Friends

Is another subdivision of modern Christians, and numbers 200,000 members. The Quakers agree in the main with the doctrines of orthodox Christianity, their difference being more in the *spirit* than in the *letter* of their faith.

Their creed differs little from that contained in the Apostles' creed. They adhere to the doctrine of the Trinity; the atonement by Christ for sin; the resur-

rection from the dead; the doctrine of final and eternal judgment; the inspiration of the Scriptures; the natural depravity of man consequent on the fall of Adam; his inability to raise himself except by the influence of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ; and other characteristic doctrines of Christian orthodoxy, excepting that they reject the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Society of Friends has avoided any literal definition of its creed, but bases it on the words of Scripture. It has not escaped the schisms which have sundered all other Christian sects, that of the Hicksites in America being the principal offshoot from the main body.

Although the Society of Friends lays the same stress upon the necessity of believing in the doctrines of orthodox Christianity on the part of those who wish to be saved, they have distinguished themselves above all other Christians by insisting on the necessity of following out, in daily life, the practical teachings of Christ—those teachings, in fact, which, in the first part of this work, I have endeavoured to show, are the *only vital* portions of Christian teachings, and the one thing needful for salvation, and so expressed by Christ himself. Although, however, they have not neglected the vital teachings, they have always shown their preference for the doctrinal teachings as a *sine quâ non* to salvation by expelling from their body all who declined to accept these doctrinal teachings.

They believe that it is the Holy Spirit, or the *indwelling* Christ, that alone maketh wise unto salvation, illumining the mind with true and spiritual knowledge of God; hence they do not accept paid and specially trained ministers, nor set forms of worship, but they meet together in silence until one of them believes himself inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak.

They believe that they need not perform any symbolical rites, in order to have communion with Christ, but that they can have daily communion with him, through the

Holy Spirit, and through the obedience of faith. They ignore the religious observances of days and times, with the exception of the Sabbath.

They believe in the necessity of obeying Christ's injunction not to take oaths, and they endeavour to live closely to his teachings, at peace with one another, discountenancing war, slavery, and ill-will. They are also distinguished by a peculiarity of dress, and by their discouragement of all frivolous amusements, and a cultivation of gravity and seriousness of demeanour. Almsgiving and good works also form a distinguishing characteristic of the Quakers; in short—but for their narrow-minded adherence to doctrinal teachings of no vital importance, and directly provocative of uncharitable feelings between man and man—they may be said to live truly Christian lives, *benevolence exemplified by beneficence*.

The Plymouth Brethren

Also claim to be Christians, but believe that the true Church consists of themselves and other "chosen ones" in the various Christian Churches. They hold strictly Calvinistic opinions—original sin and predestination, the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, the merit of his obedience, the power of his intercession, and the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. They practice the baptism of adults without regard to previous infant baptism, and acknowledge the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but reject confirmation and all ecclesiastical organisation.

The Universalists,

A sect which exists largely in America, and numbers in all 656,000 members.

They consider themselves Christians, but reject the doctrine of eternal perdition, believing that evil will be ultimately eradicated from the world, and that all erring

creatures will be brought back to God through the irresistible efficacy of Christ's divine love. "They argue that, when an infinitely wise, holy, and benevolent God resolved to create man, it could only be with a view to his everlasting good; that if He did allow him to be tempted and fall, it must have been because He foresaw that, through sorrow and suffering, man could rise to higher degrees of perfection; that, therefore, all punishment (or what, with our limited knowledge, we conceive to be such) is of necessity designed as a remedial agent, and not intended to satisfy God's indignation as a sovereign at the disobedience of His subjects; that no other view of the subject is compatible with the Scriptural, and especially the New Testament, representation of God as a 'Father,' or with the oft repeated declaration (in various terms) that Jesus Christ was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. In answer to those who adduce against them the express language of Scripture—*e.g.*, 'And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal' (Matt. 25 : 46)—they reply that the word *aiōnios*, translated 'everlasting,' does not necessarily bear that signification; that properly it does not express the idea of duration at all, either finite or infinite, but was rather used by the sacred writers to denote a mode of existence distinct from and wholly dissimilar to any mere *chronic* state; in proof of which they point to such passages as—'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (John 17 : 3), where life eternal is affirmed to be *knowledge*—that is a present state of mind, and not a perpetual hereafter of duration."*

The foregoing tenets of the Universalists agree so closely with the conclusions come to in the first part of this work upon the questions of eternal punishment, that I have thought them worth setting out at some length.

* "Chambers' Encyclopædia."

The Unitarians

Number 183,000 of the Christian sects of the world, and include a larger proportion of the educated classes than perhaps any other. Their distinctive tenets are as follow:— They reject the Trinity, believing that God exists in one person only. They do not believe that the Bible *is* the Word of God, but that it *contains* it. They do not accept the Divinity of Christ nor his supernatural birth, thinking those parts of the Scripture on which this doctrine rests unreliable. Christ's death they regard as of less importance to us than his teaching and example; in short, merely as an attestation to the truth of his mission, and a preliminary to his resurrection. One section of the Unitarians believe in the miracles, and regard them as a proof of the Divine origin of the truths of Christianity. "Christ is regarded as an ambassador from heaven to earth; the miracles he wrought are his credentials; and the moral and religious truths which he taught are his message."

Others again, like Theodore Parker, reject the miracles altogether as being incredible and not sufficiently attested, but they do not on that account attach less value to the truths of Christianity.

This section of Unitarians hold that inspiration is not the peculiar quality of the Bible, but is common to all religious literature, and that it in no case implies immunity from error, but must be treated like any other historical work.

Unitarians, as a body, reject the entire orthodox scheme, including the Trinity, the vicarious atonement, the Divinity of Christ, original sin, and everlasting punishment, as both unscriptural and irrational. "They celebrate the Lord's Supper, not as a sacrament, but as a service commemorative of Christ's death and expressive of spiritual communion with him." They also adhere to the rite of infant baptism, though there are a few Unitarian baptist churches. Finally,

Unitarians allow of the most unrestricted freedom of religious thought, and some object even to having any doctrinal bond of union.

The Secularists.

Although both Unitarians and Secularists are by some people regarded as not entitled to be classed under the head of Christian sects, yet since they both accept the practical duties which Christ inculcated and believe in the necessity of living what, in ordinary *parlance*, are called Christian lives; and since, moreover, they number in their ranks many of the most advanced thinkers of the age, a brief notice of the views of the Secularists may not be out of place.

Secularism rejects the inspiration of the Scriptures and all doctrines whatever; accepting nothing as true which does not come within the region of positive knowledge.

Theirs is essentially the religion of the present life. With the future they argue: we have no concern since we have no knowledge. "Secularism teaches men to seek morality in nature, and happiness in duty; guiding the conduct and educating the conscience of those who do not know, or who, from conscientious conviction, stand apart from Christianity. Secularism teaches a man to acquit himself well in this world as the purest act of worship, to study the truth, to judge by reason, to regulate human interests by considerations purely human, and to act on that rule of utility which conduces to the greatest good of others; thus endeavouring to *deserve* another life by the unrelenting pursuit of duty in this." Secularism, in short, considers that the object of life is not the pursuit of happiness, but the performance of duty. It is not opposed to Christianity; it is merely independent of it. It does not question the pretensions of Christianity; it advances others. Our happiness, say they, consists in securing the happiness of the greatest number.

It will be seen from this outline that where the Secularists differ from all the preceding Christian sects consists in this: that they ignore all doctrines and revealed religion, and regard even a faith in God as unnecessary to happiness. If they believe in and substantially adopt the moral precepts of Christ to the same extent that Christians do, and if, in consequence of so doing, they lead as good lives as Christians do, it is because these principles commend themselves to their minds on the grounds of reason and experience rather than upon Divine revelation. The Christian obeys Christ's teachings because they are contained in the Bible; the Secularist obeys them because he believes them to be established truths conducive to the welfare of mankind.

Having in the first part of this work endeavoured to show that Christ, in Matthew, offers salvation to all who have done good to the poor—in short, that he has made *beneficence* the test of salvation, and having likewise shown that *benevolence* cannot be excluded, it would seem that, in view of my interpretation of *salvation according to Christ*, the Secularist must necessarily be one of the saved. When, however, we turn to the other requirement, "love of God," we see where the principles of Secularism fall short of the commands of Christ.

The Secularist differs from the Unitarian in ignoring both God and a future life. The reader will see, by referring back to p. 114 and p. 141, *ante*, that I have there considered the case of the man who lacks faith in God, and also he who lacks faith in a future life. We there concluded that, although it is impossible to conceive that such a man will suffer eternal punishment in the next life, for his conscientious rejection in this of those beliefs which his mind cannot grasp, yet it is intelligible that his happiness in this life must be considerably lessened by the want of such a faith.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Conclusions regarding the Creeds of Christendom.

IN reviewing the foregoing summaries of the various subdivisions of modern Christianity, we observe that the creeds of all these sects diminish in length in a graduated scale from the Church of Rome downwards. The Romish interpretation of Christianity is the most complicated and unintelligible of all. Quite a cloud of doctrines obscure the pure light of Christ's teachings, and render the inner truths almost invisible. The Church of England comes next in the length of its requirements from those who wish to be saved. It improves on the creed of Rome by rejecting the infallibility of the Pope, the belief in a purgatory, the worship of the Virgin Mary, the power of granting indulgences and other doctrines, and declares that Christianity is only to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles. Then come the various dissenting bodies, such as the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Independents, the Methodists, the Friends, the Plymouth Brethren, &c., who accept almost all the *doctrinal teachings* which the Church of England insists on, but differ only on minor points of Church government, or perhaps on the efficacy of baptism by sprinkling, or baptism by immersion, or the baptism of adults as opposed to the baptism of infants.

The Unitarians and Universalists are the first in our list who dissent seriously from any of the accepted doctrines of orthodox Christianity.

All the preceding religious bodies agree in believing that a belief in such doctrines as the inspiration of Scrip-

ture, eternal perdition, the fall of man, original sin, the Trinity, Christ's divinity and atonement, natural depravity, justification by faith, &c., is a *sine quâ non* to salvation. The Unitarians take up a different standpoint. They reject the inspiration of Scripture, the divinity of Christ, the atonement, the Trinity, original sin, and everlasting punishment, thus reducing their creed to very narrow limits indeed—namely, a belief in God, a future state, and Christ's practical teachings; in short, love of God and love of man, which would seem (from the summary of Christ's teachings, *ante* p. 108) to be all that Christ himself ever required.

Lastly, we have the Secularists who practically reject even these last shreds of the original doctrinal creed of the Church of Rome, and believe in nothing but *love of mankind*. Thus we see that, so far as doctrine is concerned, all these various Christian denominations interpret Christ's teachings differently, and each goes a step further than the other in dissenting from these doctrines.

One remarkable fact remains—namely, that, excepting the Secularist, all are *agreed* on what in the first part of this work I have endeavoured to show are the *vital* points of Christ's teachings, which may be summed up in love of God and love of mankind. If the reader is prepared to admit that Christ did not teach doctrinal beliefs as necessary to salvation, but that a pure life, faith in God, and love to one another, are the only real essentials to our future happiness,—then he must also admit that all these various sects of Christendom are equally acceptable in the sight of God, and

"That righteousness is not in creeds,
Or solemn faces;
But rather lies in kindly deeds,
And Christian graces."

The only obstacle, therefore, to the harmony and union of all Christian sects is to be found in the adherence to these doctrines, about which no two sects are agreed.

If I have succeeded in loosening any man's faith in use-

less doctrines by showing him that Christ never *insisted* on our believing them, but *did* insist on our loving God and loving one another, and that nothing else is required of us, I shall not have written in vain. The overthrow of man-made creeds is only a question of time. Year by year men grow more liberal-minded, and are less and less disposed to condemn as "lost sinners" those who lead as good lives as they do and merely differ conscientiously upon disputed and difficult points of doctrine. Any innovation upon the creeds of modern orthodox Christianity which does not—like Secularism—shake man's faith in God and in a future state, is to be welcomed.

Although I have admitted that all Christian sects professedly agree on Christ's practical teachings, however much they differ upon points of doctrine, it will be necessary hereafter to point out that this profession is not always practically carried out in daily life. Common experience, in fact, tells us that charity, forbearance, and love of one another are *not* the outward characteristics of modern Christians; but of this I shall have something to say later on.

I have alluded to the one great defect of the Secularist's faith, namely, that it ignores one important command of Christ—namely, faith and love of God, and likewise ignores the hope of a future life. Although most believers in God's mercy will be far from believing that eternal perdition will await such persons in the next life, yet it cannot be denied that their happiness in this life must be seriously affected by the cold negations of their creed, and those who agree in this will admit that, if any punishment is needed for not having this faith, they are punished enough already.

The advanced scientific opinions of the age all tend in the same direction, and it is, I believe, the dread of being landed in this cheerless belief that tends perhaps more than anything else to keep together the various religious bodies into which modern Christians are divided.

We see that every loosening of faith in doctrine has

tended to drive men towards Secularism. The rejection of original sin, and therefore the necessity of the atonement for that original sin, drives men to Unitarianism, and, from thence, most sceptical minds will see no reason why they should not go a step further and adopt Materialism; for the only difference between the former and the latter creed is that Unitarians believe in God and a future state—for which latter, at any rate, they can confessedly give no proof whatever, outside of Revelation—whilst the Secularists argue that, even if true, these beliefs do not concern us, and need not be accepted. Since, however, a disbelief in Divine Providence, and consequently in the efficacy of prayer, as also the want of faith in a future life—a hope of again meeting those who have been dearer to us on earth than even life itself—must render the life of a Secularist less happy than that of a believer in these doctrines, it is easily intelligible that the majority of Christians prefer to retain these consolatory beliefs, and hesitate to pull down the creeds they are brought up in. In the absence of proof that one creed is better or worse than another—and where is such proof to be had, except one return from the dead?—they naturally dislike any change. Perhaps they do not believe in their hearts that they only have the truth, and that all others are wrong—though their published creed may so declare it—but yet, they feel that the prime essentials of salvation are to be found in their creed, *somewhere*.

Two solemn facts are ever before men's eyes as they get into years—namely, that their dearest friends are in the course of nature gradually being removed from this world, and that sooner or later *they* must go too. They must be singularly devoid of feeling if they can contemplate both these facts with indifference, and yet where—excepting in the Bible—can they obtain the slightest consolation touching these questions? It is true that almost all the doctrines of modern Christianity offer little more than a vague assurance that believers will be *saved* and unbelievers *damned*, but

the secret hope which every man has, that he and his will, by some means or other, be found amongst the former, coupled with the actual *belief* in a future state which such a hope implies, must prove immeasurably more consoling than the utter absence of all such hope or belief. Young men, with no near prospect of death, and nothing to remind them of it, with the world and its delights before them, and all their friends still around them, can, of course, afford—as practically they nearly all do—to ignore the value of religious beliefs, but it is nevertheless very doubtful whether any such will find Secularist views equally consoling when, drawing near to the end of their days, they find themselves approaching the Great Beyond.

This brings us to the consideration of the various doctrines of modern Christianity which touch upon the life to come; and here, we find them all equally in the dark. Not one, excepting the Roman Catholic faith, which teaches an intermediate state between everlasting life and eternal damnation—out of which they say it is possible to raise sinners even after death—professes to give mankind any alternative between heaven on the one hand, and hell on the other.

I propose, therefore, in view of the ignorance which modern Christianity confesses to on this subject, to consider the beliefs of another religious sect, which is, perhaps, the only one, excepting the Swedenborgians, that attempts to give a rational explanation of the life after death, and actually claims to offer scientific proof of the immortality of the soul, independently of revelation.

Having devoted so much space to the principal creeds of modern Christianity, it is only fair to give a hearing to one which claims to be essentially Christian, and also reconciles science with religion, and proves to all creeds the uselessness of doctrinal squabbles and the necessity—above all else—of cultivating the inward spirit, an injunction which I have endeavoured to prove was precisely that which Christ laid so much stress on.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Spiritualists.

IT is impossible to ascertain correctly how many members of the various Christian sects are believers in the teachings of Spiritualism, simply because they do not constitute any distinctive sect, or have any places of public worship. At the same time it is believed that both in England and America there is an ever-increasing number of adherents to the new faith among the ranks of the various Christian denominations, who do not care to court unpopularity by avowing their opinions on this subject.

The movement in England supports two weekly papers, *The Spiritualist** and *The Medium*,† besides several magazines. An influential society, called the *British National Association of Spiritualists*, has its central offices, library, &c., at 38 Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.C. The Spiritualists, like all the other sects we have described, are divided amongst themselves. Their principal article of belief, which alone constitutes a man a Spiritualist, lies in the fact, that *it is possible for us to hold communion with the spirits of the departed*. This belief rests on the facts of modern Spiritualism, which are attested to by an ever-increasing literature both in England and America.

With the exception of the Swedenborgians, no other Christian sect has ever held a belief in the possibility of communicating with the spirit-world. Swedenborg, as is well known, professed to be clairvoyant and clairaudient—

* London: E. W. Allen, 11 Ave Maria Lane, E.C.

† London: J. Burns, 15 Southampton Row, Holborn, W.C.

i.e., he believed he could see and converse with spiritual beings invisible to other mortals, and his writings, which are full of the revelations he is thus said to have been favoured with, touching the life after death, are accepted by his followers as divine revelations, and entitled to as much credence as the teachings of the Bible.

The Spiritualists also believe that Swedenborg was thus inspired, but they also claim that mediumship, which they allege to have been the gift of Swedenborg, was not peculiar to him, but may be developed in all sensitives in the present day. They believe that, through clairvoyants, trance mediums, and others, the same kind of communion with the departed may be and is enjoyed amongst mankind in the present day, as was enjoyed not only by Swedenborg but by hundreds of so-called prophets in the Bible.

Spiritualists, in short, rely on the Bible as not only sanctioning and confirming the *facts* of modern Spiritualism, but also in some measure its *teachings*.

The Bible, they say, contains innumerable examples of spirit communications and spirit-power exactly on a par with the recorded facts of modern Spiritualism. They refer us to such examples as the following in proof of these assertions* :—

That spirit-power was brought to bear in the movement of material objects, as where “the angel of the Lord” (Matt. 28 : 2) rolled back the stone from the door of Christ’s tomb. Again an angel is said to have released Peter from prison (Acts 12 : 7), his chains fell off, and the prison gate opened “of its own accord.” The same help was given to other apostles (Acts 5 : 19); “The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth.” Here, be it observed, the term angel signifies, according to “Cruden’s Concordance,” “a messenger,” and is applied to “those intellectual and immaterial beings whom God makes use of as His ministers to execute the orders of Providence.”

* This collection of Bible examples of spirit-power is taken from a little work by a Spiritualist, entitled “Heaven Opened,” by F. J. T., being a collection of alleged spirit communications. London: Burns, 15 Southampton Row, W.C.

This is quite consistent, even if we accept the definition as infallible, with the supposition that they might be the spirits of departed human beings; for has not God at all times made use of men in the flesh to effect His purposes, and if He does so use those who are in the body, why not also disembodied spirits or "angels"?

Another description of spirit-power alluded to in the Bible—which is also on a par with modern Spiritualism—is to be found in 1 Chronicles 28:12, 19, where we are told David received instructions about the building of the temple by spirit writing and drawing. "The pattern of all" he had "by the spirit." And "all this the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me," &c. Elijah writes to Jehoram four years after he had passed away (see 2 Chronicles 21:6-12), "And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet." It is not stated whether this came through a "writing medium" (such as are in constant practice in our days), or was given by the direct spirit writing—*i.e.*, writing given without mortal contact, such as is, say the Spiritualists, now-a-days frequently received in the presence of mediums. The writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast (the hand also being seen, which is a phenomenon constantly witnessed at London spirit *séances*, was an instance of direct spirit-writing (Daniel 5:5). The whole of the mystical book of Ezekiel, with its continual reference to "visions," "spirit hands," "elevation of the body," "spirit writing," "spirit lights," and "spirit voice," is clear when read in the light of Spiritualism, and in no other way.

The direct spirit voice, audible to and conversing with all present, is now of common occurrence at many *séances*. In the Bible (1 Samuel 3:4-10) a voice speaks to Samuel. A voice addresses Moses (Exodus 3:4) from the "burning bush." After this, Moses receives frequent instruction by audible voice from the "angel of the Lord" (Exodus 3:2; 23:20, and following verses). Elijah is spoken to audibly by a spirit (see Kings 19:7, 13). Saul, on his road to Damascus, is struck down, hearing a loud voice, which was also heard by his companions (Acts 9:4-7).

The Virgin Mary is spoken to by the "angel of the Lord" (Luke 1:28). The shepherds were told of the birth of Christ by an angel, and they heard a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (see Luke 2:10, 13, 14). Several instances of the elevation of the body, and conveying it to various distances, whilst the medium was in a state of trance, have occurred at London *séances* and elsewhere; witness the alleged flight of Mrs. Guppy, which created considerable sensation some time ago. We read in Acts 8:39 that Philip was "caught away by the spirit of the Lord, and found at Azotus." Ezekiel

was "lifted up" and taken "into the east gate of the Lord's house" (see 11 : 1 ; 8 : 3). Elijah was taken away in a chariot of fire, and horses of fire (2 Kings 2 : 11).

Spirit lights, or fiery lights, in different forms and sizes, are constantly seen at modern *séances*. Moses saw the angel in a flame of fire, the bush itself not being burnt (Exodus 3 : 2). Abraham, also, in answer to his request for a sign, saw a smoking furnace and lamp of fire (Gen. 15 : 17). A pillar of fire guided the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 13 : 21). The face of Moses was illumined, on his descent from the mount, with the two tables of testimony which were given to him, with the inscriptions made by spirit power (Exodus 34 : 29). Again, at Christ's transfiguration, his face is said to have shone like the sun, and his raiment was white as the light (Matt. 17 : 2), which is also paralleled by the illumined appearance of materialised spirit forms said to have frequently appeared at *séances* of Spiritualists. Instances in which persons were unconsciously influenced by spirit power to speak (similar to what is called "trance mediumship" in modern times) are also given in the Bible, as where the disciples on the day of Pentecost were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues (Acts 11 : 4). Samuel foresaw this form of mediumship would come to Saul when he said to him, "The spirit of the Lord will come upon thee; thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man" (1 Sam. 10 : 6).

There are also many accounts of visions given in the Bible, from that of Jacob's ladder (Gen. 28 : 12) to the apocalypse of John. Many also are the prophecies that these shall yet be given (see Joel 2 : 28), which has a singular connection with many of the phenomena of modern Spiritualism. In the present day the presence of strong spirit power during *séances* is frequently indicated by vibration of the furniture, the room, or even the whole house, literally a quaking, such as we read of in the Acts 4 : 31 : "When they had prayed, the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." In Acts 16 : 25, 26, we read that whilst Paul and Silas prayed, suddenly there was a great earthquake, all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were loosed. The healing power now possessed by hundreds of modern spirit mediums is frequently spoken of in the Old and New Testaments. Elisha restores a child to life from apparent death (2 Kings 4 : 32-35). Naaman is cured of his leprosy by following Elisha's directions (2 Kings 5 : 14). Christ distinctly gives to his disciples power "to heal the sick" (Luke 10 : 9 ; also 17-20). When speaking to his disciples for the last time before his ascension, again he imparts these gifts to them, adding "These signs shall follow those that believe" (Mark 16 : 17).

Matthew, referring apparently to the same interview, records that Christ added, "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28 : 20), which directly contradicts the statements that these gifts were for a limited time only, but were not to continue "unto the end of the world." In the epistles continual references are made to spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 14 : Paul in the first verse says—"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts," &c.; and in 12th verse, according to the marginal reference, we should read "of spirits" in place of "spiritual gifts," the two meanings being nearly alike to Spiritualists.

In corroboration of the suggestion that the "angels" referred to in the Bible were most probably the spirits of departed human beings, we may draw attention to the remarks addressed to John by the spirit, who, in Rev. 22 : 9, is said to have shown him the wonderful visions recorded in his "revelation," on which occasion the spirit said, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets;" and yet in verse 16 we read, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things." Similar expressions in the Old Testament prove that where the words "The Lord speaketh" are used, it means the "angel" or "messenger" from God, and not God Himself.

Again, in Heb. 1 : 13, 14, we find the words—"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament we find evidence that communicating with the spirit world was then practised very much in the same way as it is done in our own day. Samuel, after his departure from the world, is said to have had a long conversation with Saul, through the mediumship of a woman who had a familiar spirit (1 Sam. 28 : 7-25), in which instance not only did the spirit prophesy (as modern clairvoyants do), but we get a remarkable corroboration of the theory that the future life begins immediately after death, and is not delayed until the "final day of judgment," for Samuel says to Saul, "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Again, in John's First Epistle, verse 1, we read, "Beloved believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." The reappearance of the dead at Christ's crucifixion is also testified to in Matt. 27 : 52, 53; and again we are told that Moses and Elias appeared when Christ was transfigured, and Christ himself reappeared and ate with his disciples on the mount.

The different phases of modern mediumship are also singularly illustrated by the following extracts from 1 Cor. 12 :—"Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant;" and 4, "there are diversities of gifts;" also 7, "the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal; for to one is given

by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another the gifts of healing;" 10, "to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues." Apropos of this subject of mediumistic powers possessed by some persons, Spiritualists are frequently asked—"Why is not everyone a medium?" It is interesting to refer to 5 : 29, where the Apostle Paul, in the same chapter of Corinthians asks, "Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts." Before leaving this branch of the subject, it will be as well to refer to another Scripture corroboration of the possibility of these phenomena occurring. It is clear that if the "dead" do reappear, they must manifest themselves to some of our senses. It may be the sense of hearing, as in the case of knocks and raps, or it may be to the eye. As there are abundant proofs that such things have been seen, not only by human beings, but also by dogs or other dumb animals, who have displayed quite as much sense of alarm as their owners (see "Owen's Footfalls"), thus disproving the hallucination theory, we may reasonably conclude that spirits must have some visible form or body, and that they are not mere "vital sparks" or incomprehensible essences as some people suppose. In the 1st Epistle to the Cor., chap. 15, St. Paul says of the resurrection of the dead—"Some men will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? . . . Thou sowest not that body which shall be; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption—it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

Whether the reader will admit that there is any analogy between the phenomena alluded to in the foregoing Biblical narratives and those of modern Spiritualism, I must leave him to determine from a perusal of the works which profess to attest the facts of to-day.

The Spiritualists assert that they have proof positive that those we mourn as dead still live and communicate with us. These are the two main facts of their faith, and having once admitted the possibility of such a communion, the question naturally arises, "What do the departed tell us about themselves and the future life?—and does their experience bear out the teachings of orthodox Christianity?"

By way of answer to these questions, I propose to set out shortly the teachings of modern Spiritualism. Before doing so, it is as well to premise that these teachings necessarily are based upon the communications of invisible beings, and since no proof can be given of their being true, Spiritualists ask us to accept them only so far as they appeal to our sense of reason and justice. They are quite content to let these revelations be contrasted with the revelations of the Bible touching the future state, feeling sure that the truth will speak for itself and need fear no criticism.

One obvious inference, as affecting the orthodox notions of heaven and hell or the state of the departed after death, must be, that if spirits can communicate at all, they are neither in one place nor the other, but in an intermediate state very similar to the Romish idea of purgatory.

Spiritualists assert that the orthodox practically know nothing of the future state. Whilst professing to believe that the dead sleep in Jesus until the final resurrection, yet we talk of our departed friends as already in heaven and being already angels. A good example of this is given on p. 212, *ante*, from the *Church Hymns*. The New Testament tells us that Lazarus went *at once* to heaven and the rich man to hell, and also that Christ descended into hell and did not ascend into heaven until the *third* day, though he had previously promised that the thief should *this day* be with him in Paradise.

When we come to ask Spiritualists what proof they have that the so-called communications from the spirits of the departed, touching their future state, are to be relied on, they refer us to the published *facts* of Spiritualism in the works before named and in their periodical press, wherein they say that during the last thirty years since the phenomena first originated, in 1847, the whole tenour of spirit communications obtained through independent mediums, in all parts of the world—America, Australia, England, and the continent of Europe, at all times and in all places—

without the possibility of fraud or collusion—all agree on the following main facts of the future life. Whenever and wherever the departed have been able to communicate, they have unanimously taught:—

That the change called death is merely a birth into another condition of life, and the *real* man is the spirit; which spirit has an organised form, composed of sublimated material, with parts and organs corresponding to those of the corporeal body; that this process of physical death in no way essentially transforms the mental constitution or the moral character of those who experience it, else it would destroy their identity; that, after death, the man finds himself in the spiritual world, which has substantial realities, objective as well as subjective; that happiness or suffering in the spiritual state, as in this, depends not on arbitrary decree or special provision, but on character, aspirations, and degree of harmonisation, or of personal conformity to universal or divine law; that therefore the experiences and attainments of the present life lay the foundation on which the next commences; that since growth is the law of the human being in the present life, and since death is merely a birth into another condition of life, retaining all the advantages gained in the experiences of this life, it may be inferred that growth, development, expansion, or progression, is the endless destiny of the human spirit; that the spiritual world is not far off, but near, around, or interblended with our present state of existence; and hence that we are constantly under the cognisance of spiritual beings; that as individuals are passing from the earthly to the spiritual state in all stages of mental and moral growth, that state includes all grades of character from the lowest to the highest; that happiness and misery depend on internal states rather than on external

surroundings; * there are as many gradations of each as there are shades of character—each one gravitating to his own place by natural law of affinity; that communications from the spiritual world, whether by mental impression, inspiration, or any other mode of transmission, are not necessarily infallible truth, but, on the contrary, partake unavoidably of the imperfections of the minds from which they emanate and of the channels through which they come, and are, moreover, liable to misinterpretation by those to whom they are addressed; hence that no inspired communication, in this or any age (whatever claims may have been set up as to its source), is authoritative any further than it expresses truth to the individual consciousness, which last is the final standard to which all inspired or spiritual teachings must be brought for judgment; that inspiration, or influx of ideas and promptings from the spiritual realm, is not a miracle of a past age, but a perpetual fact—the ceaseless method of the divine economy for human elevation; that all angelic and all demoniac beings which have manifested themselves or interposed in human affairs in the past, were simply disembodied spirits in different grades of advancement; that all authentic miracles (so called) in the past—such as the raising of the apparently dead, the healing of the sick by the laying on of hands or other simple means, unharmed contact with poisons, the movements of physical objects without visible instrumentality, &c., &c.—have been produced in harmony with universal laws, and hence, may be repeated at any time under suitable conditions; that the causes of all phenomena, the sources of all power, life, and intelligence, are to be sought for in the internal or spiritual realm, not in the external or material; that the chain of causation

* The reader who has followed me so far will remember that I have tried to prove (*ante* p. 116) that the Gospels preach precisely the same truth.

leads inevitably to a creative spirit, who must be not only a fount of life (Love), but a forming principle (Wisdom), thus sustaining the dual parental relations of father and mother to all finite intelligences, who, of course, are all brethren; that man, as the offspring of this Infinite parent, is in some sense His image or finite embodiment; and that, by virtue of his parentage, each human being is or has, in his inmost, a germ of divinity, an incorruptible offshoot of the divine essence, which is ever prompting to good and right, and which, in time, will free itself from all imperfections incident to a rudimental or earthly condition, and will finally triumph over evil; that all evil is disharmony, greater or less, with this divine principle; and hence, whatever prompts and aids man to bring his external nature into subjection to and harmony with the divine in him, in whatever religious system or formula it may be embodied, is a means of salvation from evil.*

The following are the practical teachings deducible from the foregoing propositions:—

The hearty and intelligent conviction of these truths, with a realisation of spirit communion, tends to enkindle lofty desires and spiritual aspirations—an effect opposite to that of a grovelling materialism which limits existence to the present life; to deliver from painful fears of death, and dread of imaginary evils consequent thereupon, as well as to prevent inordinate sorrow and mourning for deceased friends; to give a rational and inviting conception of the after-life to those who use the present worthily; to stimulate to the highest and worthiest possible employment of the present life, in view of its momentous relations to

* Here again the teachings of Spiritualism harmonise with the Christianity I have endeavoured to expound from the scriptures and the meaning I have put on the word *Salvation*.

the future; to energise the soul in all that is good and elevating, and to restrain the passions from all that is evil and impure. This must result, according to the laws of moral influence, from a knowledge of the constant presence or cognisance of the loved and pure; to prompt our earnest endeavours by purity of life, by unselfishness, and by loftiness of aspiration, to live constantly *en rapport* with the highest conditions of spirit-life and thought; to stimulate the mind to the largest investigation and the freest thought on all subjects—especially on the vital themes of a spiritual philosophy and all cognate matters—that it may be qualified to judge for itself what is right and true; to deliver from all bondage to authority, whether vested in creed, book, or church, except that of perceived truth; to cultivate self-reliance and careful investigation by taking away the support of authorities and leaving each mind to exercise its own truth-determining powers; to quicken all philanthropic impulses, stimulating to enlightened and unselfish labours for human good under the encouraging assurance that the redeemed and exalted spirits of our race, instead of retiring to idle away an eternity of inglorious ease, are encompassing us about as a cloud of witnesses, inspiring us to the work and aiding it forward to a certain and glorious issue.

The preceding outline of the principles of modern Spiritualism, both theoretical and practical, will give the reader a better idea of Spiritualism as a *religion* than probably any number of newspaper reports of *séances* is likely to do.

I propose to conclude this exposition by a comparison of the creed of Spiritualism with the creeds of orthodox Christianity. The obvious advantage which Spiritualism seems to possess over other creeds lies in the fact that it

gives a just and intelligible theory of the life after death. According to the Spiritualists, there is no arbitrary division of men into the hopelessly wicked and the perfectly sanctified, but each man retains precisely the same characteristics after death as before, and continues to progress ever upwards throughout all eternity. Instead of there being a temporary separation of the soul and the physical body, whilst the former awaits the resurrection of its earthly body on the day of judgment, Spiritualism corroborates St. Paul's account of the spiritual and the natural body. The two grow together and co-exist, say the Spiritualists, during the life on earth, and, in fact, it is the spiritual body and its indwelling soul which constitutes the *real man*, the physical body being merely a passive instrument through which the inner invisible spirit expresses itself in the material world. Hence, at death, the worn-out physical body, like a cast-off garment, is thrown aside, and the real man, without any loss of consciousness or identity, awakens in the spirit-world. There is no growing old, say they, in the spiritual body; the decay of the natural body is caused by the gradual loosening of the connection between the spirit and its physical organism, which tie is finally severed by death. Hence, deformities of the physical body do not affect the spiritual counterpart, and infants continue to grow even after the death of the physical body. The fact of eternal progression being man's future lot has an obvious bearing upon the orthodox doctrines of salvation, since the Spiritualists believe there is hope for every man, even the worst of criminals, or, as St. Paul says, God would "have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2 : 4). They believe that out of evil will come good, and all the miseries and evils of the world are necessary for educating and elevating the human race—each man having to work out his own salvation by actual experience of God's laws. It is needless to say, therefore, that they do not recognise any predestination or salvation for the elect. All men are God's creatures, and

all are equal in His sight, and subject to the same laws, and all will live again and progress hereafter, if not here. Hence mankind is not under the "wrath of God" through any act of disobedience in our original parents, and there being no "Fall of Man," neither can there be any necessity for a mediator, or for the sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty, as in Christ's atonement. Since Spiritualism teaches that all men, of whatever country, live after death, and can and do communicate with mortals, its adherents hold that salvation, or future happiness, does not depend on *creeds* at all; and that, therefore, Christ's mission was not to save men from any wrath to come, or everlasting punishment, but as a great Moral Teacher sent from God to raise mankind to a higher degree of spiritual happiness, to dispel darkness, ignorance, and superstition, and to give them *the kingdom of heaven which is within*. Salvation, in short, is merely another name for happiness; and, by pointing out the means of attaining it, Christ points out the road to salvation in the only sense in which it can be reconciled with reason and justice and the facts of modern Spiritualism. Inasmuch as Spiritualists believe that, after death, all men find themselves precisely in that particular state of spiritual happiness which they have in this life qualified themselves for, they say that their tenets have a most practical bearing upon every-day life in inducing men to cultivate inward purity, charity, love, forbearance, and, in short, all the commands of Christ. So far, therefore, from being anti-Christian, it breathes the highest and purest Christianity, stripped of all useless creeds and doctrines.

They do not necessarily deny either the miracles of Christ or his divinity. They recognise the probability of the former, in view of their own marvellous experiences, and consider that, were modern Christians to cultivate "spiritual gifts"—as St. Paul enjoins all men to do—they would not be liable to the reproach of having no signs and wonders to prove that they are true followers of Him who

said, "These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

As to Christ's divinity they believe, as the Presbyterian creed declares, that all souls come from God, and therefore there is a Divine element in all men, with which Divine element Christ was, as far as we know, endowed in a greater degree than all others; but, as to the necessity of believing in Christ's divinity as an aid to future happiness, they say that all spirit communications go to show that *creeds* have no saving effect whatever: that God looks at *thoughts and motives*, and it is the inner aspirations of the man towards that which is good, which alone affect his present or future happiness. The torments of the wicked arise from the stings of conscience, and from remorse, and the ever present recollection—which, after death, revives with redoubled intensity—of every wrongful act committed and wicked thought indulged in through life. These torments are not everlasting, but continue until some light of better things breaks in upon the darkened mind of the sinner, and he begins to *repent*. Hence Spiritualism teaches the possibility of repentance after death, but it also shows that mere repentance will not suffice to wipe away the stain of wrong done, and therefore there must be a new life of active beneficence, with forgiveness sought for, and actually earned, from those whom we have wronged, before happiness can be attained. Hence they believe that this repentance and new life is much easier of achievement in this life than in the next, since the knowledge of duty unperformed drags down the spirit again to earth at a time when the earthly life should give place to the higher and more glorious life of the spirit-world.

Another practical bearing upon the doctrines of modern

Christianity, which the teachings of Spiritualism at present has, lies in the efficacy of prayer. The Spiritualists' theory of prayer is perhaps the most rational of all. Since, say they, the spirits of the departed can return to earth and communicate with us through certain organisations which are mediumistic, and since they can influence the minds of men by visions or spirit voices, or, it may be, by merely mental impressions, it is not unreasonable to suppose that those who are drawn to us by ties of love and sympathy would, in the hour of trouble, seek to aid us in response to our prayers. They consider the mode in which prayer is answered somewhat analogous to the manner in which our petitions to men on earth are answered. If we are in trouble, and appeal to our friends for help, they will aid us to the extent of their ability, providing we awaken a proper feeling of commiseration in their breasts. In proportion to their goodness and our merits so will they aid us. In other words, in so far as the spirit of God dwells within them, so will they respond.

In praying secretly to the Almighty, the Spiritualists believe that they also make known their wants to their friends in the spirit-world—precisely in the same way that they might do in this—and the latter will feel disposed and be inspired or permitted by God to help them to the extent of their power, either by influencing their minds, or the minds of other men, in such a way as to modify the unhappy circumstances in which the sufferer is placed, and procure the relief asked for. In doing this the Spiritualist merely regards them—in the words of St. Paul (Heb. 1: 14), when speaking of angels—“as ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”*

The reader will probably see that the general tendency of the foregoing outline of the teachings of Spiritualism is

* Compare these teachings with the speculations of Mr. Greg on the same subject in a subsequent chapter, where he objects to the efficacy of prayer as necessitating a *supernatural* intervention with fixed laws.

to corroborate what I have repeatedly tried to prove in other parts of this work—namely, that the *doctrines of modern Christianity are in nowise essential to salvation*. I have endeavoured to show this on the authority of Christ's own teachings and that of his Apostles. I have endeavoured to show it on the grounds of reason, justice, and experience; also that these doctrines are the *only* portion of modern religious teaching upon which men never can and never will agree; and lastly, I have shown that the only religionists who base their tenets upon professed communications from those who have put creeds to the test of actual experience in the next life, also agree in rejecting doctrines. What amount of credence the reader will be inclined to attach to the evidences of modern Spiritualism, I do not know; but, at least, its teachings seem as plausible as the scheme of salvation which orthodox Christianity holds up to our astonished gaze in lieu of the simple truths which Christ taught.

The reader desirous of following up this subject further will find in the *Appendix* a list of works attesting to the facts on which Spiritualism rests. In addition to these a large number are advertised in the *Spiritualist*, which constantly publishes fresh evidence of the same description.

CHAPTER XX.

Modern Christianity in Daily Life.

HAVING now very fully discussed modern Christianity in the light of its sects and their professed creeds, let us see how it works in daily life, and whether modern society is more alive to the *Religion of Jesus* than Christian Churches seem to be. In short:—do men love one another?—are they good to the poor?—do they show faith in God's providence?—are they forgiving to their enemies and not given to revenge?—do they live at peace with one another, avoiding strife and dissension?—are they disinterested, unselfish, indifferent to worldly pursuits, and intent on cultivating feelings of charity and forbearance to others?

To begin with, it is well to observe that the more intelligent of the laity are, as a rule, far more charitable and liberal-minded in their attitude towards those who differ from them on religious grounds, than one might expect from those who, in their churches, profess that they alone have the key to everlasting life and all others will be eternally lost. No better proof of the utter worthlessness of sectarian differences could be adduced than the answer which such a layman would give to the question, "Do you really believe that your friends will be lost because they do not belong to your creed?" Most men would smile at the idea; but, nevertheless, they will take no steps towards becoming united with those who differ from them. With women, whose religious convictions are deeper, and whose views are usually more narrow, the case is often different. They do not scruple to act towards others as if the latter

were really God's enemies, whilst amongst the more ignorant of the population these religious differences frequently result in disturbances and bloodshed.

Let us see whether, amongst the various subdivisions of Christ's followers, there exists that peace, goodwill, charity, and forbearance, which we have a right to expect from those who profess to be true followers of Christ.

Is it not a notorious fact that the principal cause of all social disharmony is to be found in these religious differences, which many men profess to think of no consequence? In society, as every one knows, religion—which ought to interest mankind more deeply than any other subject,—is a tabooed subject of conversation, simply because its discussion is certain to result in quarrelling. What, again, causes more bitter and intense political feeling than a question bearing on religion? Is not England at the present time divided into two hostile camps—the one composed of Christ's followers in the Church of England, and the other of Christians belonging to other denominations, not in the Church, represented respectively by the Church Associations, and the Liberationists? We have only to glance at the history of the last fifty years to see that there has been a constant political struggle going on between Christ's followers in the Church and those outside. What we see now is no new condition of things. Step by step, Dissenters and Roman Catholics have had to fight for the privileges which they now enjoy, and which their fellow Christians—who should have been all charity and forbearance—have systematically resisted.

The Times, in October 1876, thus alludes to the past career of the Church of England:—

“The name of Church, or Church of England, attached to any secular institution, or secular cause, is a watchword, a battle cry, and no more. A glance at the history of this country will show this. As a fact, expressed in popular language, and understood by the people of this country, the ‘Church,’ or the ‘Church of England,’ was in favour of the alliance of Continental Absolutists

against Constitutional Government ; it was against the amelioration of the Criminal Code, and in favour of the principles of Vengeance and Prevention as against that of Reformation ; it was in favour of hanging for almost any offence a man is now fined for at the Assizes ; it was in favour of the Slave Trade, and afterwards of Slavery ; it was against the Repeal of the Test and Corporations Act ; it was against Catholic Emancipation ; it was against Parliamentary Reform and Municipal Reform ; it was against the Commutation of Tithes, though it has since had to acknowledge the Act a great benefit ; it was against the repeal of the Corn Laws and of the Navigation Laws ; it was against Free Trade generally ; it was against all Education beyond the simplest elements, and even religious instruction ; it was against Public Cemeteries and Extramural Interment ; it was against the Division of Parishes. Indeed, it is hard to say what it has not been against in the way of improvement or conversion. One reform, perhaps, must be made an exception. The 'Church'—that is, 'the Church of England'—was only too ready to accept the Poor Law Amendment Act, simply because the old laws had been worked so as to change every labourer into a pauper, throw him on the Rates, and then pay the titheowner with labour which he did not want in lieu of the money which he did want. . . . In all these cases it was everywhere a worldly Clerical Oligarchy, combined for mutual advantage, and working for high preferment, that took the name of the Church, and lent the name of the Church of England to leaders of Party. The Church of England all this time was helpless, because misrepresented, duped, and betrayed by that which called itself the Church Party."

The contests of to-day are pettifogging squabbles about the right of one set of Christians to exclude another body of Christ's followers from burying their dead in a portion of God's earth, which the former claim to be specially sanctified to their use. Where is charity, love, and forbearance here?

Then, again, we have the much more momentous question looming in the future of Disestablishment. What does this mean, from Christ's point of view, but a miserable squabble about earthly precedence? One section of Christ's followers set themselves up as entitled to social and political precedence over all other sects ; and in spite of the well-known fact that this attitude causes jealousy, disputes, and

hostility in the minds of a large proportion of their fellow-subjects; and in spite, too, of the fact that, in the eyes of Jesus, such precedence is of no possible advantage to them, and that perfect equality would be obviously much more conducive to that peace on earth and good-will towards men, which it was the special mission of their Great Leader to establish, they persistently oppose all concession, and refuse to retire from the disputed position they occupy. Surely it would be much more consistent with the professed principles of Churchmen, as Christ's followers, to abandon these mere worldly distinctions, to hold out the right hand of fellowship to their fellow Christians, and be content to admit Dissenters to an equality with themselves. What, but pride, self-seeking, and want of charity, can explain the existence of the present state of hostility between Christ's followers on questions of this kind? Even supposing that Dissenters are as much to blame as Churchmen, and that it is the former who are envious and hostile, surely the duty of making concessions for the sake of peace is none the less incumbent on the latter. From our point of view, however, as critics of the Christianity of to-day, it matters not who is to blame. We take the fact as we find it—viz., that two of the largest subdivisions of Christ's followers, who ought to love one another, to be charitable, forgiving, and forbearing one to another, fail to be anything of the kind; on the contrary, they are perpetually quarrelling and abusing each other.

If we are to believe the Bishop of Manchester, there is no vital difference whatever between Churchmen and Dissenters. The latter are as good Christians as the former, and the Church does not presume to say Dissenters cannot be saved. We have seen what the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England say on this subject; and although it would rather seem as if the Church there claimed, by right of Apostolic succession, to possess exclusive powers in regard to the administration of the sacraments of Baptism

and the Lord's Supper (which it declares to be necessary to salvation), yet—in the face of such an opposite declaration as the following speech by a bishop of the Church—it would be impertinent in me to try and prove otherwise. The Bishop of Manchester, with that large-heartedness and Christian liberality of mind which are so characteristic of him, but which few of his fellow-clergy share, thus referred to the salvation of Dissenters in a speech reported in the *Manchester Courier* for April, 1876:—

“He saw it stated in one of the Manchester papers the other day that a clergyman in his (Dr. Fraser's) diocese had gone to a person and stated that if he was a Dissenter he could not be saved. He (the Bishop) at once wrote to the clergyman, and found that the thing was much exaggerated, that the clergyman had said nothing of the kind; but still there were people—and he was sorry to say the Roman Church held that doctrine—who believed that no one outside the pale of their religion could be saved. If the Bible required him (the Bishop) to hold that doctrine, he thought he should be the most miserable man in the world. But he prayed with St. Paul that the grace of God might rest upon every one who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. When he found a man who loved the Lord Jesus Christ he could shake hands with that man, and recognise him as a brother, although (as in the ancient story) he might not be able to frame his lips to pronounce the shibboleth of party exactly as he (the Bishop) pronounced it.”

These words breathe a spirit of Christian charity which is highly creditable to the Bishop as a man and a Churchman, and it would be a healthy sign of the times if Churchmen generally, in society and in politics, treated their fellow-Christians, amongst Dissenters, in the same spirit.

Very different are the sentiments of such a man as the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie, Rector of St. Albans, London, who, under the auspices of the Manchester Church Committee, in February, 1876, delivered a lecture on the Constitution of the English Church, in the Manchester Town Hall. Alluding to the High Church party, or Catholic movement, as it was called, he told his hearers

that "this movement began upon the conviction that the Church of England was the Church of Christ to this country, and that it was so completely and absolutely the Church of Christ to us, that, so long as it existed, *it was impossible for any other religious body whatever to be the Church of Christ to this nation.*"

Another representative of the Church of England—to wit, the Dean of Manchester—has also expressed himself in similar language towards his dissenting fellow-Christians. His sermon, which naturally gave great offence to non-Churchmen, is thus epitomised by one of the local papers in June, 1876:—

"The main object of the Dean's sermon appears to be to insist that Dissenters are among 'them which are evil,' as described in the second chapter of the Revelations; that Dissenting ministers are the modern counterpart of those whom the Ephesian Church had tried and 'found them liars,' and that fellowship with Dissenters is to be regarded and dealt with as a heinous sin.

"The Dean's text was taken from the message addressed to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, and the discourse consisted in a practical adaptation of the various items of the message to the circumstances of English Christians at the present day. One of the good deeds for which credit was given to the Ephesian Church is described in these words: 'Thou canst not bear them that are evil.' The application followed straight. Are you, my brethren, bearing them that are evil? . . . Whom do we bear? Whose conduct are we tolerating and condoning? The sinners are all priests, and here is a list of them. 1. Drunken priests; 2. Blaspheming priests; 3. Priests who deny the grace of holy orders; and 4. *Priests who fraternise with Dissenters.* These classes of offenders are all comprehended under the general head of 'criminous clerks.' The Dean deplores the fact that at present there is no short and easy method of dealing with them."

The Dean also advises his hearers "to resist courteously, and calmly and temperately *to deny the authority of all Nonconformist teachers to be apostles sent from God.*"

How different are such modern Christians as the Dean, to Jesus, who said of the man that was found casting out devils in Christ's name, and forbidden to do so by the

disciples, "*Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is on our part.*"

It is idle to deny that the bulk of the clergy and their followers do not regard their fellow-Christians amongst Dissenters in any sense as equals, or treat them with that charity and love which should distinguish a sincere Christian. Those who know anything of English life, both in the country and in all the smaller towns, know full well that to be a Dissenter means social ostracism amongst almost all Churchgoing people. Socially, the Dissenters and Churchmen form two distinct classes; they stand aloof from each other, and regard one another with jealousy and ill-will on the one hand, and pride, suspicion, and contempt on the other. Excepting in the large towns, where such narrow-minded ideas do not readily take root, society is divided into Church-going circles and Dissenting circles; and in Ireland, where Roman Catholics form a larger proportion of the population, there are the Protestant circles and the Catholic circles. These social barriers, it is easy to see, are evils of no small magnitude. The amount of ill-will which they engender, and the loss of happiness which must ensue from the want of sympathy and friendship, which might, but for these miserable doctrinal differences, exist amongst brother Christians, is a feature in the Christianity of every-day life which cannot be ignored.

In order that the reader may have some facts before him in proof of these statements, I will quote the following extract from a letter, by Mr. Isaac Hoyle of Manchester, which appeared in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* in February, 1876. Mr. Hoyle writes to controvert certain statements made by a leading Conservative Dissenter:—

"According to the report in the papers, Mr. Richard Haworth, in speaking at the Conservative meeting in the Free Trade Hall last night, devoted some time to prove that Wesleyan Methodists 'were on an equality with all persons in the kingdom.' As a Wesleyan Methodist, I feel it my duty to place before my co-

religionists evidence of an entirely opposite character, leaving them to determine its value.

"At the Hull Conference, the special meeting of the Committee of Education recorded 'repeated complaints of the intolerant spirit manifested by clergymen of the Established Church towards the children of our people' (see Minutes of Conference, 1869, Appendix viii., p. 278). Afterwards, in full Conference, the following resolution was passed:—'The Conference, having learned with much regret that in many parts of the country clergymen and others continue to refuse instruction in national schools to the children of Wesleyan Methodists, unless such children can also attend the Sunday-schools of the Established Church, affirms its conviction that the enforcement of an adequate conscience clause in all schools receiving Parliamentary grants for building or maintenance is essential to the due protection of the liberties of the people' (see pp. 173, 174).

"This was upwards of six years ago. Has she become more tolerant since? The Rev. Gervax Smith, President of the Conference, speaking at Bolton, on the 19th January last, said:—'An attempt was being made on a large scale to plant the heel of intolerant bigotry on them as Methodist missionaries. To-day there are 2000 villages where there was not perfect religious freedom. . . . He knew godly men in farming districts who had been driven from their farms because they were Methodists. . . . In fact, he could fill all the 16 pages of the *Times* in small print with accounts of cruelty and oppression which had been shown towards Methodist people in this country.'

"The *Watchman* newspaper of the 26th January, 1876, in a leading article on this subject, says:—'Having known the English villages for many years, we are quite prepared to sustain all that the President is reported to have said, and no Nonconformist, well informed upon the question, will think the statement exaggerated. . . . Wesleyan poor are excluded from those charities which have been left, not to the Episcopalians in particular, but to the whole of the parishioners in general. . . . It has too often happened that a Methodist has had to leave his farm, because he would not leave his religion. The Church of Rome cannot be the same enemy to religious liberty in the villages as the Establishment was and often is. Why not publish all the facts upon which these general statements are based? If such a record had been kept for the last forty years, the nation would be startled by the publication of the 'Black-Book.' It may be asked why do not the country people in general, and the Methodists in particular, appeal publicly to the national sense of fair-play. The answer is very ready. Villages are timid, and shrink from publicity. Wesleyans are too often on sufferance, and would be

either deprived of their bread, or compelled to seek it elsewhere, if they told the public, through the press, all they suffer and all they know. But their patience under suffering is coming to an end, and the President has rendered great service at Bolton to the cause of national justice and religious liberty. . . . In respect of religious liberty, life in an English large town, and life in an English village, is often and actually like two different nations with opposite principles of Government, the one giving religious liberty, and the other only affording to the Nonconformists a hindering social ostracism and a persecuting religious toleration."

Another specimen of the narrow, uncharitable attitude which some of our clergy assume towards Dissenters in practically treating them as lost sinners is afforded by a letter published in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* for May 30, 1876, wherein the Rev. C. A. W. Reade, dating from Lower Norwood, S.E., writes to a wealthy Manchester merchant, asking him to contribute towards a sum of £1000, which, says Mr. Reade, "we are very anxious to secure before Michaelmas to enable us to begin a mission to a large and poor population, who are *sunk in infidelity and dissent*." Unfortunately for the rev. gentleman his correspondent turned out to be himself a Dissenter, and not appreciating the compliment of being classed with infidels, he sent the letter to the papers for publication.

The following lines from a local paper also sufficiently illustrate the working of modern Christianity in daily life to be worthy of a place in this chapter. As they speak for themselves, it is unnecessary to comment upon them. They are addressed "To a Bigoted Cleric":—

"The curate of Stand, near Manchester, refused to bury a child which had been christened by a Dissenting minister of the Gospel.

"From whom, oh, saintly cleric! did you learn
Your narrow, soulless creed?
For if the pages of the Book we turn,
In them we do not read
The slightest warrant for the faith you hold.
But as we scan the page,
We find the would-be bigot sternly told
That childhood's heritage—
Without a word of dogma or dissent—
Is to afford for heaven an ornament.

- "He did not ask the children whence they came,
 Or whether priestly lips
 Had mumbled o'er them in the Church's name,
 Or if the holy tips
 Of priestly fingers had bedewed their brow
 With drops adored by some;
 He never asked the little children how
 They could have dared to come.
 There were around him bigots such as thou;
 The race of bigots flourished then as now.
- "Suffer the little ones to come to Me,
 Forbid them not, He said;
 Of such as these My Kingdom formed shall be.
 Each bigot hung his head.
 Hang thine too, deacon, priest, whate'er thou art;
 But wretched bigot still.
 Thy Master's creed with thine can have no part;
 Thou workest not His will,
 Who taught of love and charity divine;
 Alas! such teaching differs far from thine.—*City Jackdaw.*"

The following facts, testified to in the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, in a letter signed "R. Foulkes Griffiths, Tarporley, Cheshire," are also worth quoting:—

"With regard to the parish charities, the conduct of the clergy is in many cases simply abominable. Look at the way in which the families of men who receive good wages are assisted with ten shillings from the Christmas charity fund, when poorer people are left penniless, pinched by poverty and want, just because they believe the Prayer-Book is wrong in some of its teachings, and have the courage of their convictions in going to chapel. The parasites of the rector, who fawn before him, and in mock accents deliver themselves of the cant of hypocrisy before the 'squire's lady,' or the 'countess,' or 'my lady' of the hall, are rewarded,—while the more honest are, because they are conscientious, left without help. It should be remembered, too, that to labourers who gain fifteen shillings a-week, and have a family of six children, the bonus of ten shillings is no trifle.

"In the parish adjoining the one last referred to, a curate boasted, at the delivery of articles of clothing to the poor on St. Thomas'-day, that 'he had fought to have the disbursements in the power of the clergy, and he had won.' Previously the overseers chosen by the parishioners had the control. It was a fact that most of the money left to the parish was bequeathed within the memory of some of the inhabitants by a Nonconformist. Now it is disbursed by the clergy; and one year at least the vicar showed his bias, by saying he would issue tickets instead of clothing, so that the poor should choose what they wanted in the shops

of Church-people. Though the largest shops were held by Dissenters, they must not be patronised. If the vicar could be partial among wealthy tradesmen, what could be expected amongst the poor? Is not this sort of thing worrying? Would that the electors in the boroughs knew the serfdom of villagers in relation to the ecclesiastical authority.

"But we are obliged to submit to have men who treat us in this way as trustees of public charities; they are the chairmen of our vestries, and villagers are bound, even in the vestry, for the clergymen can, at will, adjourn any vestry without regard to the majority. Is not this a harassing law?

"I could tell of farmers who have been prevented having farms because they were Dissenters, and the rector took care to influence the landlord against them.

"In this parish from which I now write, several tenant farmers and others, whose landlords were much on the Tory line, ventured to subscribe to the Liberation Society. You may judge of our surprise when we found the list copied in the *Ritualistic Parish Magazine*, in order that landlords might know which of their tenants were Liberationists; and it was significant that one of the subscribers, who was a freehold farmer, had his name left out. Those who were tradesmen or tenants were alone indexed.

"This worrying reaches us everywhere. I could not have our chapel school-room painted without having the painter—a Church-goer—asked by one of the clergy, 'What are you doing in that bad place?' And we must have such men chairmen of our parish meetings! We must have those who, in many parishes, persuade people not to patronise Dissenting trades-people, trustees of the local charities! The State must place one minister in a position which gives him the ear of the influential, though he uses this influence against the majority of his parishioners. The influence of such an ecclesiastical order, several branches of which are bent upon crushing nonconformity, is most hateful in the parochial schools. In a parish not far from the one, in the county of Radnor, previously referred to, it happened that the schoolmaster was ill. The rector took his place, very humbly and from a kind motive, I confess. The rector was well educated—a relative of the bishop—no uncommon case in fat livings. When addressing the children one day he seems to have recollected that there were many Baptists in the little parish. He therefore asked the children of the Baptist parents to sit on a certain form. Of course they were not baptized. He then, before all the school, pointed to them as pagans.

"This has to be submitted to. If Nonconformists were the servants of Government, living on State pay, and incapable of

doing their proper work, any severity shown to them would be paraded as injustice. But because the people support their own religious systems, without having them pauperised by national aid—because these are loyal and independent subjects, honest and poor men—they are goaded and wronged."

It will be seen from the foregoing extracts that the religious differences between Churchmen and Dissenters are regarded by very many people as of grave importance, and really do result in great practical inconvenience, stirring up angry feelings, and all manner of unchristian sentiments in the breasts of people, all calling themselves followers of him who said, "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you," "By this shall men know that ye are my followers, that ye love one another."

If this be the test of Christ's followers, where are we to find them? Certainly not in the Church itself, for there we see as much as, if not more, dissension than exists outside its pale. Do we not find the Church perpetually engaged in internal disputes about Ritualism? Is it not a fact that one section of the Church is constantly in litigation with another section, and is not each side vieing with the other which shall raise the most money to spend in legal proceedings? The Apostles' injunctions against *strife and division*, which I have set out, *ante* p. 42, are, it is needless to say, totally ignored by these so-called Christians. It is scarcely possible to take up a newspaper, without now seeing a report of some anti-Ritualistic prosecution or disturbance. It would seem, in fact, as if the present representatives of Christ troubled themselves more about such trumpery points as "the Eastward position," the use of "crucifixes" and "candlesticks," "vestments," or the title of "Reverend," than about the necessity of following Christ's example, and leading a pure life. As the *World* says (Sept. 1875), "Everybody abuses everybody else's creed, but very few pause to think whether, after all, morality is not better than dogma, and a pure life than candlesticks

on the altar." In view of what Christ taught about charity, forbearance, humility, peace, and love one to another, it is not too much to say that those clergymen who—like the Rev. A. Tooth, of Hatcham—persist in annoying and outraging the feelings of a large number of their fellow-Christians, and setting man against man, by the disturbances which their perverseness invariably causes, are utterly unworthy of him they profess to follow, and, so far from being teachers of Christianity, are undeniably its greatest enemies.

Apropos of these pitiable Ritualistic squabbles, the following noble words of the Bishop of Manchester—in January, 1877—deserve the utmost prominence:—

"His Lordship said that when one saw the present condition of faith and truth, not merely within the Church of England, but everywhere almost over the world; when one saw how far people were wandering from or losing sight of the cardinal truths of the gospel; how they were fretting and fuming, and fighting and striving, and calling one another angry names about vestures, and postures, and ceremonies, and rites, and ordinances, how unspeakably refreshing it was to be brought back to the example of the great Apostle, and hear what was the guiding principles of his life—to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of their sins. That gospel never seemed to grow old. In every congregation there were those who had heard the story told a thousand times who still delighted to hear it told, and to whom it was never old or wearisome, but to whom strivings about vestures and the eastward position, and about ceremonies, seemed a strange, a pitiable loss of opportunities and unutterable and lamentable waste of power, doing little for the great mass of darkness, sin, pauperism, ignorance, crime, and vice with which they were surrounded—well enough, perhaps, for a few dainty young gentlemen and dainty young ladies who liked to sing in choirs and decorate churches at Christmas time. Don't let them suppose that he undervalued those things. But they were not the weighty matters—these were not the things for which Christ came down from heaven and died upon the cross. They might do all those things, and yet they would be, as it were, outside the pale. They might sing and elaborate and bring their offerings to God's house, but unless they brought them with a heart and life devoted to Christ, they were all vain, and worse than vain."

The narrow adherence to doctrine which distinguishes one section of the Church of England, as compared with the noble liberality of others, like the Bishop of Manchester and Dean Stanley, is aptly illustrated by the following letter from Dean Goulburn to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford in December, 1872:—

“The Deanery, Norwich, *December 12, 1872.*

“Very Reverend and Dear Sir,—I beg to resign into your hands, as chief Resident Officer of the University of Oxford, the select preacher’ship which was conferred upon me the year before last, . . . as the most forcible protest I can give against (what I must consider to be) the unfaithfulness to God’s truth which the University manifested by its vote of yesterday in favour of Dean Stanley. Now, Sir, the charge I bring against Dean Stanley, expressed in the most general and least offensive terms I can find, is that he seems, by his actions and his writings, to draw the line nowhere, and to hold out the hand of fellowship to all religionists indifferently, however condemned by the plain letter of our formularies, and that he thus muffles the Church’s protest in favour of the faith. He is well known to be the mouth-piece and exponent of a school which is daily numbering more and more adherents among both clergy and laity—a school which, having no real faith at all, surrenders bit by bit the Holy Scriptures, the miracles, the doctrine of Christianity, until nothing remains (as is frankly admitted by some of the furthest advanced), save the sublime morality of the Gospel recommended by the example of Christ.

“I know not how it comes to pass, Sir, that this school is tolerated among us with such equanimity, allowed to broach, even from the pulpits of the Church of England, its cold speculations, its maudlin sentimentalism, its miserable disparagements of any definite doctrine, in place of the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I only know that, partly through the timidity of our rulers, partly through the laxity of public opinion, partly through a weak desire to make religion (what Bible religion never was and never can be) acceptable to all men, and the Church universally comprehensive, our communion is becoming perfectly lawless; there is no king in our Israel; every man does (and thinks) what is right in his own eyes. For myself, I can no longer hold office under such conditions. If the pulpit of the University is to be turned into a vehicle for conveying to our youth a nerveless religion, without the sinew and bone of doctrine—a religion which can hardly be called faith, so much as a mere Christianised morality—I for one

must decline to stand there. . . . I remain, very reverend and dear Sir, with great respect, your faithful servant,

“E. M. GOULBURN.”

I think the reader who has the *Religion of Jesus* before him, will need no words of mine to point out the pitiable blindness, bigotry, and uncharitableness of the foregoing sentiments. As an antidote to it, I cannot do better than again to quote another of the Bishop of Manchester's generous and truly Christian utterances. Speaking of the comparative importance of doctrine as compared with morality, he says,—

“The members of the early Corinthian Church made great disturbances about minute captious points of doctrine, breaking the unity of the Church, dividing themselves into sects and parties, whilst they were extremely lax in morality and Christian discipline. Now, if they must draw a distinction between doctrine and morality—though he did not say they could afford to be indifferent to doctrine, or that there was no such thing as doctrine that they were to hold fast—but if they must draw a distinction between doctrine and morality, he asked them, as sensible, intelligent men, to tell him which was the more important thing—that a man or woman should be sound in what they called their doctrine, or pure, holy, and chaste in their lives? He was afraid that, like the Corinthians, the Church in England to-day was almost a bundle of sects, who looked upon each other as enemies, instead of professing, clinging to, and ‘contending for the faith once for all delivered to to the saints.’ There were those who held what was called the doctrine of the particular self-elect, but he (the Bishop) preached to them the doctrine which Paul preached to him, that ‘Christ died for all,’ and that there was no one so far off from God who could not be ‘drawn to Him by the leadings of His gracious Spirit.’”

These sentiments are precisely those which it is the purport of this work to endorse; and if the Bishop of Manchester would only follow out his expressions to their logical conclusion, we should be much better pleased. He has already admitted that Dissenters are as much entitled to salvation as Churchmen, and has so narrowed doctrine as to reduce it merely to a love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If it would make the Bishop unhappy to believe that all Christians must be lost who cannot frame their lips to utter the precise creeds which the Bishop can utter—though they have had all the advantages of a Christian training—should it not make Christians more unhappy to believe—as they logically must—that none can be saved who, by reason of mental constitution, ignorance, or religious bias, find themselves conscientiously unable to believe in Christ's Divinity or the saving efficacy of the Atonement? They may be willing to believe that all Christians will be saved, but can they be indifferent to the fate of non-Christians; seeing that the latter stand toward the former as three to one in point of numbers? Many of the master-minds and leading thinkers of the age are men whom Christians denounce as "infidels," "heretics," "atheists," &c. Are such men and women as Comte, Carlyle, Goethe, Emerson, Humboldt, J. S. Mill, Tyndall, Huxley, Herbert Spencer, Geo. Elliott, Greg, Arnold, Harriet Martineau, and others, to be admitted to salvation? If, however, such men as the Bishop of Manchester are prepared to go the length of admitting to salvation even those who do not rank themselves under any of the orthodox creeds, there would then be no advantage in retaining any mere doctrinal creed at all. Would it not be better at once to throw down all such barriers between man and man as the doctrines of modern Christianity, and preach salvation through love of God and a pure life in the light of Christ's teachings? It is difficult to see how the doctrines of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, or Original Sin* or Election, as efficacious to our salvation, can be abandoned, whilst others, like the Atonement and Divinity, are retained; and yet, there is as little autho-

* Whilst these pages are passing through the press, I see another speech of the Bishop of Manchester (February, 1877), wherein he said that "he agreed with Bishop Butler, that on the whole human nature was favourable to virtue rather than to vice; and he thought when they put a better view before the people they did not generally choose the worst."

rity in the teachings of Christ for the one as there is for the other.

I have illustrated the narrowness and bigotry which characterise some Churchmen in their behaviour towards Dissenters. Not less intolerant—so far as it dares venture—is the attitude of the Church of Rome in England towards those who differ from its special interpretation of the Religion of Jesus. Here is a specimen of the Christian sentiments of Catholics towards Protestants, culled from the *Tablet* of January 27, 1877:—

“Considering the end of man and the purpose of civil society, murder and robbery are light crimes, and the spread of epidemic diseases a misfortune of no consequence, in comparison with the crime which Luther and Calvin perpetrated when they began their revolt from the Church.”

The unwise zeal of a few Protestants during some recent mission service of the Church of England, in January, 1877, in soliciting Roman Catholics to attend their services, called forth a long letter from the Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford to all his priests, “On the duty of Catholics towards the Anglican Movement,” from which I make the following significant extracts:—

“While, however, we gladly hear that our non-Catholic neighbours are seeking, according to their light, for the grace of repentance and the way of salvation, it may be necessary to speak a word or two of warning to some of our own flock. As you are probably aware, rooms in many of the mills and factories are being set apart for special services, and in many cases the Catholic operatives have been invited to attend: while clergymen also, and their agents, have visited even the private houses of Catholics in different parts of Manchester to solicit their attendance in Protestant churches. But ‘the children of the light and of the day’ (1 Thess. v.) know full well that *it would be sinful in them to take part in any non-Catholic services*. Never from the beginning of the world has it been lawful for the members of the true Church to participate in the worship of any other religion. . . . Warn, then, your people against *the impious and fatal spirit of liberalism, which maintains that all religions are equally good, and that God has committed the gratuitous and divine gift of man’s salvation to each and every sect indifferently*. It may be

well to bring under your observation the two following passages, which occur in an allocution and an encyclical addressed by the Sovereign Pontiff to the Bishops. . . . 'It is part of our apostolical duty to excite your episcopal care and vigilance to use every effort to eject from the minds of men the opinion, as impious as it is dangerous, that the way of eternal salvation can be found in any religion. Use all diligence and learning to show to the people committed to your care that the doctrines of the Catholic faith are in no wise opposed to divine mercy and justice. *We must hold as of faith that out of the Apostolic Roman Church that no one can be saved, that she is the only ark of salvation, and that whosoever has not entered within the ark shall perish in the deluge;* on the other hand, it must be equally held as certain that they who are in ignorance of the true religion, if this ignorance be invincible, are not therefore condemned as guilty in the eyes of God.'

"Again, in the encyclical entitled '*Quanto Conficiamur*,' the Holy Father thus addresses the bishops upon the same subject:— 'We must here again, dear sons and venerable brethren, mention and reprove that most serious error, which is unhappily held by some Catholics, that people living in errors and out of the true faith and Catholic unity can attain eternal life. This is altogether opposed to Catholic doctrine. . . . But it is also a well-known Catholic dogma that *no one outside of the Catholic Church can be saved, and that those who contumaciously rebel against the authority and definitions of the same Church, and that those who are obstinately separated from the unity of the Church and from the successor of St. Peter, the Roman Pontiff, to whom "the custody of the vine was committed by the Saviour" (Council of Chalced.), cannot obtain eternal salvation.*'"

Although in these encyclical letters there are saving clauses which appear to modify the intolerant harshness of these doctrines of the Romish Church in favour of those who are "in invincible ignorance of our most holy religion," yet the concluding paragraph of the above extract clearly conveys no uncertain intimation of the awful future which this infallible Church considers all good Protestants are preparing for themselves. It is to be hoped that there will, amongst Catholics, continue to be a great deal of "that impious and fatal spirit of liberalism," which this benighted exponent of the Religion of Jesus so much deploras. Long may it flourish and increase! If our Catholic and Protestant fellow-Christians seriously regarded

each other in the light which these narrow-minded, uncharitable teachers would have them do, the result would be to spread everywhere hatred and ill-will, in place of that "peace on earth and good-will toward men" which they *ought* to preach. The responsibility which must rest with men who—calling themselves ministers of Christ—implant such unchristian feelings in the breasts of their followers is an awful one indeed, and one which, it is to be hoped, they have well considered.

Since the want of charity, which modern Christians display one towards another, is so great, we need not be surprised to find that towards unbelievers there is a still greater display of hatred and ill-feeling.

These are the charitable and "Christian" sentiments of the *Church Herald* in its obituary notice of the late Mr. John Stuart Mill, in May, 1873 :—

"Mr. J. Stuart Mill, who has just gone to his account, would have been a remarkable writer of English if his innate self-consciousness and abounding self-confidence had not made him a notorious literary prig. His 'philosophy,' so called, was thoroughly anti-Christian; his sentiments daringly mischievous and outrageously wild. As a member of Parliament he was a signal failure, and his insolence to and contempt for the great Conservative party was well known. His death is no loss to anybody, for he was a rank but amiable infidel, and a most dangerous person. The sooner those 'lights of thought' who agree with him go to the same place, the better will it be for both Church and State. We can well spare the whole crew of them, and shall hear of their departure, whether one by one or in a body, with calm satisfaction."

I pointed out, in my introductory remarks to Part II. of this work, one significant fact, from which all thinking men can draw but one conclusion, and which is patent to every impartial critic of modern Christianity—namely, that all the various sects differ in their interpretation of Christ's teachings, and yet all claim to be exclusively right! I illustrated this fact by extracts from the various creeds of the Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths, and I

have now given the reader a few practical illustrations of the same phenomenon as it crops up in the newspapers. We have seen the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie, in the Church of England, telling us that the Church of England is "the Church of Christ to this country, and it is so completely and absolutely the Church of Christ to us, that, so long as it exists, it is impossible for any other religious body whatever to be the Church of Christ to this nation." We have also the Dean of Manchester urging his hearers "to deny the authority of all Nonconformist teachers to be apostles sent from God;" and we see also Dean Goulbourn protesting against the Christianity of Dean Stanley, because "he holds out the hand of fellowship to all religionists indifferently," and he denounces the "weak desire to make religion (what Bible religion never was and never can be) acceptable to all men, and the Church universally comprehensive." Then, again, we have the Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford, in one part of his letter to the priests of his diocese, telling them to "look over the extent of this vast city and its suburbs—a hundred teachers are pointing in opposite directions. In one street a voice proclaims, 'Lo! here is Christ;' in another, 'Lo! he is here.'" After this apt illustration of the doubt and uncertainty which prevails amongst the various divisions of modern Christians, he proceeds, like Dean Goulbourn, to denounce "the impious and fatal liberalism which maintains that all religions are equally good," and concludes by telling everybody that "no one outside the Catholic Church can be saved." Lastly, to complete the picture of bigotry and intolerance, we have the *Church Herald* declaring "that rank but amiable infidel, and most dangerous person," John Stuart Mill, to have been "thoroughly anti-Christian" in his teachings, and plainly hinting that he has gone to hell!

The only inference which intelligent laymen will draw, from this mass of confusion and contradiction, is, that none of these professed exponents of the Salvation of

Christ have the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and that—as before stated—the only sure reliance is to be placed on those great moral lessons upon which they are all agreed, and upon which Jesus himself emphatically insists.

It is difficult to recognise any consistency between the liberal expressions of the Bishop of Manchester regarding the salvation of Dissenters with the continued existence of the Athanasian creed in the Church service; and yet, Convocation in 1872, by a majority of sixty-two to seven, decided to *retain it in its integrity*. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, commenting on this decision of Convocation, made use of these words:—

“The real objection to the creed, whether well-founded or not, is simply that the body of it is nonsense, and that the damnatory clauses are offensive and immoral. . . . To call upon English people to devote to eternal damnation every one who does not believe in the absolute truth of an English translation of a clumsy Latin adaptation of unintelligible utterances in Byzantine Greek upon subjects which avowedly lie beyond the range of the human mind may be quite right, but those who assert it ought to be able to show why it is right, and to show at the same time some sort of appreciation of the reasons which lead other people to consider it wrong. . . . The utter weakness, the paltry way of dealing with subjects which ought to be regarded as great, the determination not to look at the real essence of the matter in dispute, and not to admit even that its essence is in dispute at all, which have been shown by the different speakers in Convocation on this subject, are thoroughly characteristic of the clergy; and such utterances are about all that will ever be got out of them in their corporate capacity.”

The continuance of this creed in the Church service, must necessarily tend to keep away large bodies of Christians amongst the Dissenters—to say nothing of Churchmen—to whom it is obnoxious. Some people, however, justify the retention of obnoxious creeds and articles, because they dislike all changes, and because, they say, no one is required to believe them. I have already protested against this weak policy, and, as an illustration of its effect on

some minds, I may quote the following extract from a letter by an English Church clergyman, which recently appeared in the *Spectator*, under the title "A Renunciation of the Clerical Profession":—

"Sir,—Will you allow me to state in your columns my reasons for renouncing my profession as minister of the Church of England? Though the step itself may be one of only small local interest, my reasons for the step may require the attention of those interested in Church matters. . . . [Here follow the writer's objections to certain of the Thirty-nine Articles, which I need not here set out.]

"I will not accept the assertion that these Articles may be left alone, for no one heeds them. These Articles have not fallen into desuetude; they contain the very doctrines our popular Revivalists most insist on, as I have again and again heard them do. Hear Ira D. Sankey, the Revivalist singer:—

'Weary, working, toiling one,
Why toil you so?
Cease your doing, all was done
Long, long, ago.

'Tis to Jesus' work you cling,
By a simple faith.
"Doing" is a deadly thing,—
"Doing" ends in death.'

The uselessness of all action but what proceeds from the assurance of a supernatural initiative is seldom, I admit, so strongly put as here, and yet it does not seem to me more strongly put than our Articles warrant.—I am, Sir, &c., G. D. SNOW."

Why, it may be asked, are the clergy and the public so indifferent to this unsatisfactory state of things? It seems hardly consistent with that earnestness and zeal for the truth, which should characterise those who are truly pious. One is tempted to suppose that worldly considerations may conduce, not a little, to that apathy which the *Pall Mall Gazette* so vigorously denounces.

A Unitarian minister, Rev. Wm. Bennett, of Paisley, in reviewing a lecture by the Rev. David Watson of the Established Church of Scotland, entitled "The Drifting Church," makes some pertinent remarks upon the causes that, in Scotland, contribute to the bolstering up of worn-

out creeds, which have considerable application to the present state of the Church of England. With us, as in Scotland, we are frequently reminded that the Church's creed expresses one doctrine, whilst its ministers preach another.

"Says Mr. Watson, 'What we hear to-day from our pulpits . . . is not the inexorable Calvinism our forefathers were wont to deal in. We sit under men who endeavour to be philosophic, not fanatic. We hear less of Calvin and more of Christ now.' But the clergy do not, Mr. Watson complains, speak out boldly and plainly the truth at which they have, by their study and reading, arrived. 'They give,' says he, 'a gloss to an old error they do not believe in, but dare not destroy its credibility frankly "for fear of the people." And this they do, and sometimes rejoice in what they do, forgetful that an old error will do more harm in a single day than a new truth will do in a whole age. . . . In one word, what we here call diffidence is professionally wrong and practically bad,—for what a man thinks and does not say, he will very soon say whether he thinks it or no. And as we have much of that existing in our pulpits in these very days, I take it as a sure sign and a certain prophecy of ecclesiastical changes of no mean kind.'"

Mr. Bennett, in his review of Mr. Watson's lecture, protests against the use of such mild terms as *diffidence* and *disinclination*, as the cause of the unwillingness of the clergy to reform their creeds,—

"What! *diffidence*, *disinclination* merely, for men thus culpably and knowingly to put their well-lighted candle under the bushel of old, well-approved phraseology and orthodox technicalities. . . . Why, methinks the term *dishonest* would more correctly describe the position of such men, and that *trimming* and *time-serving* would not be in the smallest degree inappropriate. But amidst the general, all but universal, demoralisation of the times, who will venture to throw such goodly stones at this wickedness in the high places of the Church—at these watchmen on the towers of Zion, who cry not aloud and warn the people of the enemies—ignorance and superstition—by which they have so frequently and for so long been beset on every side? Mr. Watson asserts that this untruthful position of the pulpit of our 'orthodox' Church is the result of 'fear of the people.' Is it not more a result of fear on the part of the clergy of each other—fear of the Church courts, and of the investigations and censures of presby-

teries, synods, and assemblies? Or is it not even more fear of the ignorance and superstition of pulpit and pew combined? The pew, no more than the pulpit, is always true to its enlightenment. If the pulpit fears the people, the people no less certainly fear the pulpit. If the clergy dread the loss of their '*positions of usefulness*,' and of their professional caste, through any premature confession of departure from the old lines, the occupants of the pews no less truly fear the injury of their business, and the lessening of their *respectability*, from a similar cause. The position, in fine, is this: the pew keeps a watch over the orthodoxy of the pulpit, and the pulpit over the pew, and the ignorance and stupidity of each over both, whilst the sterling honesty and intelligence of the working class, that has neither wealthy customers nor artificial class-rank to lose, comes out and is separated from the whole matter, and looks with mingled pity and contempt on both pew and pulpit."

A lively controversy on "Creeds and Subscription" has quite recently been raging in the columns of the *Scotsman*, emanating from clergymen in the Scotch Established Church. Commenting on the "very strange revelations in regard to the state of mind of those who have subscribed the Confession," which this correspondence has revealed, the editor of that paper thus sums up its results:—

"On the whole, the inference from our correspondence, which has been a tolerably representative one, is that as far as regards the whole Confession of Faith in its natural sense, the clergy may be divided into three classes—those who do not believe it, those who try to believe it, and those who believe that they believe it. This, if it corresponds to fact, is not a wholesome state of things as regards public morals, and in one way or other ought to be corrected."

In justification of sectarian differences, some people argue that they are natural to mankind, and religion is all the better for it. Even the Bishop of Manchester, in a speech delivered in May, 1876, actually said, "They were taunted with having differences of opinion on the Church of England. Why should they not have differences of opinion? No two minds were exactly constituted in the same way, and disagreement of opinion was a thing humanity must retain. But they hoped, and thought they

had sufficiently large room and ample space in the Church of England for the development of individual opinion; at the same time, as he trusted, they all held to the great principles, that they were a great body, built upon one foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ, animated by one spirit, growing up, as it were, into the same God and Father of us all."

These are brave words, but they will hardly bear analysing in the light of daily experience. To say that differences, which lead men to strife, hatred, and uncharitableness—such as are to be found in the Church itself in regard to Ritualism—or the jealousy, persecution, and animosity which exist between Churchmen and Dissenters on the one hand, or between either of these bodies and their Roman Catholic fellow-Christians on the other hand, are unobjectionable, and to be approved of, is of course going much further than the Bishop ever intended. In order to produce a combination of melodious sounds from a number of instruments, it is certainly *not* necessary that they should all play the same note; but it is quite clear that there must be perfect harmony between the various notes, or the result will sound discordantly. Those who defend religious differences, and argue that, out of the mental friction they engender, truth is evolved and progress stimulated, must not forget that there must exist a Christian harmony between the various shades of opinion, and they must be stimulated by a desire to aid one another, and be charitable, forgiving, and forbearing. It is needless to point out that these distinguishing traits of Christ's followers are not visible in the relationship which exists either between the disputants in the Church, or the Protestants generally, in their attitude towards the Romish Church. Since the latter, as well as Protestants, are also—to use the Bishop's words—"built upon one foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ," his remarks about the unobjectionable nature of differences of opinion would seem to be equally applicable

to all the various sub-divisions of modern Christians. Any one who examines these differences of opinion must see at a glance that they belong to the order of differences that must always produce discord rather than harmony.

Mén can agree to differ upon matters which they are indifferent about; but, unfortunately, modern Christians regard points of doctrine as of vital importance. Hence, on these subjects they will never agree to differ, until they appreciate the fact that *Christ did not insist upon doctrinal beliefs as needful to salvation*. The practical duties of a Christian life, with faith in God's love, he did insist upon; and here, we find that all Christians, of whatever denomination, are unanimous. About what is false or irrelevant they have been quarrelling for eighteen hundred years, and are as far from agreeing as ever they were.

As an instance of the angry feelings which doctrinal differences between modern Christians are causing in our midst, I may recall a circumstance which was reported in the *Times*, under the heading, "*A Temperate Controversialist*," in September, 1875.

This melancholy exhibition of the antagonistic feelings which rival followers of Christ are led to indulge in by reason of their doctrinal differences was published in the *Times* in October, 1875, and will doubtless be fresh in the memory of most of my readers. The controversy arose between two rival ministers of Christianity, one a Protestant clergyman and the other a Catholic priest, the latter having made a convert of the son of the former. In reply to a letter of indignant remonstrance from the father of the boy convert, the priestly fanatic replies as follows:—

"St. Leonard's-on-Sea, *Sept.* 24, 1875.

"Rev. Sir,—I have received a letter from you on the subject of your son. You there express your great aversion to my having been the instrument, in God's hands, for his reconciliation with the Church of his fathers, the Church of the living God, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, the pillar and foundation of truth, outside of which no one can be saved. This, however, according

to your letter, seems to have given you very great umbrage indeed. It seems to vex you much; and you are evidently embarrassed through it, in your position of life, as being a paid minister of an heretical sect.

“In general, I find that you are aggrieved ‘at the invasion of your parental authority,’ which seems to awaken in you the expectation ‘that the fathers and mothers in this free country’ must decide whether they will submit to the hearts of their children, whom God has given them, being secretly admitted into a Church whose teachings they believe contrary to the Word of God at an age when those children are not capable of forming an opinion for themselves on the most important truths. To be sure, ‘the fathers and mothers of this free country,’ who for these last twenty years have been turning the children out of doors, locking them up in prison in their own homes, and disinheriting them, because, even as men and women, they only exercised their liberty in becoming reconciled to the Catholic Church, and then in work-houses, and all such institutions, the wholesale pitiless pirating away by force of thousands of our children from their parents, who execrate the sects into which their little ones are plunged, more even than hell. And, as if we had all forgotten, the grim crusade of Protestantism in Ireland these thirty years back, going with its counterfeit Bible in one hand and its lean soup in the other, and because that Catholic people ‘in their liberty’ would not desert the Church of their hearts, were left by tens of thousands to perish by famine. Better a million times over they had fallen into the hands of Turks or cannibals who sucked up their blood, than to have perished under the stark dereliction of these lost myrmidons of a Protestant apostolate.

“Finally, in the face of the thousand ministers and members of the two great universities who have, in spite of the greatest earthly sacrifices, left Protestantism to enter that Church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, be not so positive. In sight of all those ancient churches and parishes in your own county, all whose steeples and walls proclaim that they were built and founded by your Catholic forefathers, pause, lest on the Day of Judgment they who raised them should call God to condemn you, because, in sight of His eternal laws, you are but a usurper in one of them. Pause! For obstinately resisting the Church of the living God, and refusing to enter it, the sword of God’s eternal damnation is hanging over your head; and it requires but the moment of death for it to fall upon you and plunge you into that eternal ruin, where there is no order, where there is gnashing of teeth, where the worm

never dies, and where the fire is never extinguished.—I am, Rev. Sir, your obedient servant, ———."

In the foregoing, we have a good illustration of the smothered feeling of hatred and ill-will which still smoulders in the breasts of these rival sects, ready at any time to break forth again in actual violence. Those who think that in the nineteenth century such scenes are impossible should recall the incidents of the Murphy riots, which are still fresh in our recollection.

It is not too much to say that, if the rival Christian sects, the Protestants and Catholics, could but agree to sink their doctrinal differences, and unite on the firm basis of Christ's moral teachings, the political atmosphere of the whole of Europe would be deprived of its greatest disturbing element. Probably the exact influence of religious differences, even in our day, in promoting hostility and jealousy between rival Christian nations, will never be made known; but, that it is still considerable, there can be no doubt. The days of crusades and religious massacres are probably over, and any examples of the bloodshed, wickedness, and misery which Christian differences on points of doctrine have brought about in past times, are surely needless for any student of history. For the purpose of this work, it is unnecessary to inquire which side was to blame—whether Protestants or Catholics—it is sufficient to point out that the atrocities in question *were* perpetrated, and that, by men calling themselves Christians, and professing to act in the interests of Christianity, and really persuading themselves that what they did was pleasing to Christ. The leading divines on both sides sanctioned and approved of persecutions and bloodshed, and their followers naturally followed the example of their teachers, and from what motives did they do so? Simply because those whom they tortured, rejected one or other of those points of doctrine which the Christian world still continues to quarrel about. Now-a-days, we are content to abuse one another,

and show our hatred and distrust by political fights and social ostracism. Formerly, it was war to the knife, when one or other sect got the upperhand for the time being. The cause of dispute, however, still exists; and although the rival sects may not seek to destroy life, they are none the less alien to the teachings of him who said—"By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another."

If men who rule the destinies of nations are more capable of judging what are the hidden motives of the principal actors in European politics than we who do not see behind the scenes, then a recent declaration by Prince Bismarck touching the influence of Rome in bringing about the Franco-German war of 1870 is entitled to considerable weight. It will be remembered that Prince Bismarck—in a remarkable speech at Berlin—directly accused the emissaries of Rome of telegraphing from Berlin false rumours about the alleged insult by the German Emperor to the French Ambassador at Ems in 1870—just before that terrible war—for the express purpose of inflaming the angry passions of the French people. Be that as it may, it is exceedingly probable that the Romish Church has, in more than one instance in our day, betrayed its trust as an expounder of Christ's teachings by encouraging war and bloodshed. The wars of 1866 and 1870 were both sanguinary contests between Protestant and Catholic nations, and those who are best able to judge, believe that the Romish Church has secretly striven to humiliate Prussia, through Catholic powers. In return, as we all know, Prussia has entered upon a domestic warfare against the representatives of Catholicism in Germany. So far, indeed, are Christian nations, from acting up to the teachings of Christ in regard to the all-important precept not to *avenge* wrongs, that a war of revenge by France against Prussia was, quite recently, openly talked of in the public press. After eighteen centuries of Christianity, the bare

possibility of such a shocking motive for further bloodshed being publicly canvassed, is itself a commentary on modern Christianity which it is needless to enlarge upon.

As a specimen of the sentiments which are thus openly expressed, I quote the following, in May, 1873 :—

“THE GERMAN AND SWISS CONFLICT WITH ROME.—There is no doubt whatever that, in order to recover its old ascendancy, says the *Press and St. James' Chronicle*, Rome is even now contemplating a religious war in the form of a war of races between the Latin and the German peoples. The overthrow of Protestantism, which opposes the right of free inquiry into spurious authority, is the end to be accomplished. Rome is eagerly preparing for this great struggle. The overthrow of the temporal power of the Pope, the triumph of Germany—the birth-place of the Reformation,—the attempted invigoration of Switzerland by the revision of its constitution, and the recent changes in Austria and Spain, render action imperative after Rome has gained concentration by the new dogma, and thus become better prepared for the conflict. France is the centre of its hopes and the mainstay of its policy. It is expected that France will seek ere long to avenge, on the Rhine and the Po, her recent defeat and disasters; and this war of revenge will be fostered by Rome, by all the means in its power, in the hope of destroying the German empire. With this view, Jesuitism strives to rouse to fanaticism, against the State's authority, the Ultramontane populations of Germany and Switzerland, so that they may aid the enemy against their own land on the day of trial. At this moment even respectable French papers preach zealously this alliance with Ultramontanism. Rome (they say) is Germany's worst foe, and therefore it is France's best ally. Switzerland is already doomed to destruction in the councils of these new confederates. The expulsion of Mermillod is to be avenged by blotting Switzerland from the map of Europe, and leaving only the historical memory to its posterity. That will be the signal for the great struggle and the greater war of vengeance that will follow. When such things are openly spoken and written it is time to make ready for the battle. Germany and Switzerland are warned in time. They do wisely to buckle on their armour and sharpen their weapons.”

The following from the *Times*, in October, 1873, in commenting upon the remarkable correspondence between the Pope and the Emperor of Germany—which at that time made such a sensation throughout Europe—is also significant of what may be impending even in England :—

"But few Englishmen will read these two letters without the reflection that the British and the German empires are not so very different or so differently circumstanced, as regards the matter of this remarkable correspondence, that we can afford to dismiss it from our thoughts. The Rome which molests Germany and menaces its disruption, . . . is the same Rome as that which in these isles fraternises with every form of sedition, and affiliates every movement against the peace and union of the realm. 'Rome has spoken,' and at once her bishops and clergy throw themselves by crowds into the ranks of any confederacy which has but the power to discredit authority, interrupt peace, and hinder legislation. Let no power whatever; no class, however strong; no interest, however vital and self-assured, suppose that it can always and actively resist the attacks of an agency which aims first and foremost to be destructive, in order that it may build on the wreck it has made with the materials it has disintegrated. Is it certain that the powers of Europe will have to act together against a common foe? They are acting together, and it is this concert which has helped to bring on this correspondence. Insular as we are, we are too close to the neighbouring continent not to have at least our share of the common danger."

To return once more to the behaviour of Christ's representatives in England, it is worth while to record, as a sign of the times, the miserable squabble about the right of a Wesleyan minister to be styled "Reverend" upon a tombstone. This pettifogging question was actually deemed of sufficient importance to be submitted, on appeal from the decision of two lower Courts, to the judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which decided the matter in favour of the Wesleyan minister, whereupon several clergymen of the Church of England actually wrote to the most important and respectable of religious newspapers—the *Guardian*—to beg that, in consequence of this legal decision, they themselves might in future no longer be addressed by a desecrated title! The *World*, commenting on this, remarks,—

"There are men capable of unreasonable conduct in all professions and all classes, and the circumstance of a few clergymen having written the letters we have alluded to would not of itself have called for comment. The really ugly fact is that the editor of so high class a religious journal should have thought fit to

publish such letters; and we are accordingly driven to the conclusion that this almost childish display of intolerance does not appear so ridiculous to the clergymen who read the *Guardian* as it does to nine lay members out of ten of the Church of England."

To the credit of the Church be it said, however, that there was at least one man capable of seeing the gross inconsistency of such childish vanity in a Christian minister. His letter puts the question in its true light, and is worth quoting. The writer, the Rev. W. R. Arrowsmith, vicar of Old St. Pancras, in a letter to the *Daily News*, thus expresses himself,—

"AN OUTCOME OF RITUALISM.—As a gentleman, a beneficed clergyman in the Reformed and Established Church of England, as a genuine Protestant, as a minister in the Church of God, suffer me, I pray you, to enter my indignant protest against the miserable, the offensive, the churlish, the mischievous bigotry which disallows the adoption of the term Reverend by the father on the gravestone of a Wesleyan minister's daughter; and let me ask whether the Rev. Henry Keet, incumbent of Oroston Ferry, and the Right Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, be faithful disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, the immortal friend of many, who forbade his followers to be called Rabbi."

One of the most distinguished characteristics of the present day is the increased interest which religious questions now excite; whilst, on the other hand, it is no less remarkable that there is also wide-spread infidelity. The Bishop of Gloucester made some remarks in one of his speeches which very truly express this. He told his hearers that "dread forces and influences were arrayed against the Church. Two influences were ever working against her, and which, by their own antagonisms, became year by year more defined and developed. These were free thought, infidelity, on the one side; and enslaved thought and superstition on the other. In reference to some of the most vital and cardinal questions, doubt had disclosed itself to an extent that those who took the gloomiest views nine or ten years ago never could have anticipated."

A recent Bampton lecturer, Mr. Curtis, in speaking of the

present state of Christianity amongst us, asked, "Can any man, of any sect or of any school of opinions, say he is satisfied with things as they are? . . . And the simple facts are these: first of all, that nearly one-third of the adult population of this country rejects the ministrations of all the sects and of all the Christian organisations alike."

The present attitude of the Christian religion towards the masses is thus expressed in one of the leading London papers :—

"The temper of the educated mind in England towards religious sectarianism, the propaganda of parties, and the war of creeds might be best described as one of intelligent indifference. There is a general agreement to recognise the moral truths which underlie the various protestations of ghostly faith, and to ignore the fanatical and generally artificial zeal with which they are disseminated under the veil of celestial revelations exclusively deposited in one or other of contending cliques or mutually embittered factions. . . . Bland clergymen in spotless bands mount the pulpit, Sunday after Sunday, and fail to rouse the echoes with their decorous platitudes; the congregation of old people and babies slumber morally, if not physically; and the sturdy young men play bowls in the back-garden or drink beer or smoke pipes in the taproom of the public-house. Good persons think this sad and shocking, and ask, Who is to blame? . . . A Sabbath-day religion is worth no more than the gaudy floral decorations which scarcely outlive the commemorative service; but a morality of every-day life and the knowledge of a love and a sympathy which surpass our finite hopes and eclipse our feeble desires—these are things which may beautify and cheer the poor man's life. It is the complicated edifice with which we have overlaid the simple sacrifice of faith, the gilded fetters with which we seek to enchain men's consciences, that drive away willing but reasoning minds. They cannot accept everything, and so they believe nothing. . . . If 'old faiths crumble and fall,' we must build up new ones; where the law of development in physical things is known and universally accepted, why should we refuse to recognise the same divine order in spiritual things? More life, more heart, more depth, love for the beautiful, forgetfulness of self—this is the creed we want; let us have it."

All this goes to confirm what I have urged in the preceding pages, that the Christianity of to-day is not the

religion of Christ. It is built on an entirely false foundation. The assumption throughout is, that Christianity is a collection of doctrines, and that upon a belief in these, salvation depends. The sermons I have quoted, as also the whole of the various creeds I have analysed, all point to the same conclusion. As the writer in the last extract observes: "there is a general agreement to recognise the moral truths which underlie the various protestations of ghostly faith," or, in other words, all sects, as I have before pointed out, agree upon the moral teachings of Christ, but differ upon his doctrinal teachings. As long, therefore, as the clergy fail to see what true Christianity is, and as long as they persist in preaching the false, so surely will they drive men into infidelity. What is wanted, above all things, is a religion of every-day life: not a Sabbath-day religion; and it is the duty of the clergy to follow the glorious example of their Lord and Master and his Apostles—as witness the extracts *ante* pp. 36 and 46—and preach a practical every-day religion. Whenever men do this they are gladly listened to. When they drone out such lifeless discourses as those I have quoted from, *ante* p. 202, it is hardly to be wondered at, if they drive away earnest men and bore the indifferent.

One of our magazines, in an article upon unpractical sermons, writes as follows:—

"The preacher does not deal with the faults and failings which every thinking man sees on all sides, but he preaches over the heads of his hearers at the vices which flourished in a past age. It is absurd to suppose that a man of real ability is compelled in consequence to fall back upon a few worn-out ideas, or that he will be heard with impatience if he ventures to discuss the great questions of the day. Is it not a fact that, whenever a man of vigorous thought ventures to attack the special vices of the age, he fills his church and makes his voice heard beyond the bounds of the parish? The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher is a man of this stamp; he deals fearlessly with the sins of the nineteenth century, and his voice is heard on both sides of the Atlantic. Even an indifferent orator can excite the sympathies of his audience if he

deals with the daily difficulties which men constantly encounter in life; but Burke or Demosthenes would fail to make the trials and temptations of heroes who lived in a remote age anything but mere abstractions. . . .

"When Ward Beecher speaks of 'Wall Street' and its doings, all the world stops to listen; there is a field for such sermons, and they will sell whether they be bound in pasteboard or vellum. Men are not unwilling to hear the truth, even if it be rugged and harsh; and if they stay away from public worship, it is not from any fear of censure, but because they dislike platitudes. The majority of the printed sermons which are so actively advertised, seem to be written by the Honey-bun school for the special needs of women, who appear to be born for an innate love for platitude and kid-glove propriety."

By way of a practical illustration of the kind of sermon that is wanted now-a-days, I may quote the following clever article from the *Boston Christian*:—

"We want a religion that bears heavily, not only on the 'exceeding sinfulness of sin,' but on the exceeding rascality of lying and stealing—a religion that banishes small measures from the counter, small baskets from the stall, pebbles from the cotton-bags, clay from the paper, sand from sugar, chicory from coffee, alum from bread, and water from the milk-cans. The religion that is to save the world will not put all the big strawberries at the top and all little ones at the bottom. It will not make one half pair of shoes of good leather, and the other half of poor leather, so that the first shall redound to the maker's credit, and the second to his cash. It will not put Jouvin's stamp on Jenkins's kid gloves, nor make Paris bonnets in the back-room of a Boston milliner's shop; nor let a piece of velvet that professes to measure twelve yards come to an untimely end in the tenth, or a spool of sewing-silk that vouches for twenty yards be nipped in the bud at fourteen and a-half; nor all-wool delaines and all-linen handkerchiefs be amalgamated with clandestine cotton; nor coats made of old rags, pressed together, to be sold to the unsuspecting public for legal broadcloth. It does not put bricks at five dollars per thousand into chimneys at contracts to build of seven dollar material; nor smuggle white pine into floors that have paid for hard pines; nor leave yawning cracks in closets where boards ought to join; nor daub the ceilings that ought to be smoothly plastered; nor make window-blinds with slats that cannot stand the wind; and paint that cannot stand the sun; and fastenings that are to be looked at, but are on no account to be touched. The religion that is going to sanctify the world pays its debts. It

does not consider that forty cents returned for one hundred cents given, is according to the Gospel, though it may be according to law. It looks on a man who has failed in trade, and who continues to live in luxury, as a thief."

Another blot on modern Christianity, or, at least, upon one important branch of it—viz., the Church of England—consists in the sale of livings. This scandal has been repeatedly denounced by some of our Bishops; but it nevertheless flourishes as much as ever, and must therefore be considered as a justifiable transaction by those who are responsible for its continuance.

Bishop Wordsworth, in a pastoral recently, made some very severe comments on the subject. He compares the proceedings in the ecclesiastical auction room to the slave market at Zanzibar.

" 'We have opened slave markets of souls in London,' though we have put down the similar scandal in Africa. Congregations of immortal beings, we are told, are publicly put up and sold to the highest bidder, but we thought that there was some way in which the conscience could be implicated in such transactions without being liable to the dreadful qualms of simony. But this is a mistake. The Bishop will not listen to any casuistical pleadings of the kind. The livings are bought by the clergymen 'either directly by his own money, or by some clandestine and oblique subterfuge and evasion,' and then he comes and presents himself with a solemn declaration in utter contradiction of his real motives in the affair. Referring to the advertisements on this subject, which disgrace the pages of religious journals, the Bishop does not hesitate to say that 'the purchasers of preferment are tempted by the inducement, not of saving souls and promoting the glory of God, but by such allurements as gardens and greenhouses, coaches and stables, a comfortable parsonage, well kept grounds,' and such other considerations as usually allure the wicked; and adds that 'the Divine Head of the Church, who, on two occasions, drove the traffickers in sacred things with holy indignation from His presence, marks these things.'"

As the extent to which livings are sold, and the details of these transactions are not generally known, and, as I believe, more good can be done by exposing abuses in the Church, than by wilfully shutting our eyes to them, I think

no apology is needed for giving further publicity to the following extracts from some letters which appeared in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* in November, 1874, under the title,—

“THE CURE OF SOULS BY PURCHASE.

“Sir,—Both Manchester and Liverpool will be interested to know that there are some good things in the ecclesiastical line for sale at present. In the last number of the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* there are advertised the advowsons and next presentations of two parish churches in Liverpool—viz., St. Ann’s and St. Paul’s Some people may be a little frightened by reading the law of simony, which is ‘the crime of buying or selling ecclesiastical preferment,’ to which severe penalties are attached; but the law can be easily evaded by buying or selling during the lifetime of the present holder, and opinion in the Church of England does not look on that as much worse than smuggling goods by means of false declarations.

“In the case of St. Ann’s, the seller is a parson in the Church of England, so there can be no possible scandal in buying what *he* has to sell. Here are the particulars:—

“‘CHURCH PREFERMENT.—Advowson and next presentation for sale of St. Ann’s Church, Liverpool. A new and very handsome Church. Age of present incumbent, sixty-eight.—Apply to T. H. A., 22 Parsonage, Manchester.’

“The clergy list informs me that the patron and would-be seller is the Rev. T. Stringer, curate of Horton-cum-Woodlands, Dorset; that the population to be sold is 10,300; and that the income is £99 per annum.

“The next is St. Paul’s, Liverpool:—

“‘Advowson of St. Paul’s Church, Liverpool, close to the Exchange. Handsome Church. Incumbent, aged sixty-four.’

“This is a bigger ‘spec’ than St. Ann’s, for, though the population is only 7637, the value is £400 per annum. The owner of St. Paul’s is not a parson, but is a Mr. R. G. Ramsden, and evidently he has his eye on the cotton brokers when he adds ‘close to the Exchange.’ . . . It is certainly not flattering to us in Lancashire that most of the parsons who advertise for livings add ‘the South preferred,’ or that higher prices should always be asked for the ‘home counties.’ If I was quite sure you would not object, I would return to some more of the many curiosities of the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* next week.—I am, yours truly,

“PROMOTION BY MERIT.

“Manchester, Nov. 4.”

"THE CURE OF SOULS BY PURCHASE.

"Sir,—In my letter of last week I called attention to the advertised sale of advowsons and next presentations of two parish churches—St. Ann's and St. Paul's, Liverpool—and in the kindest spirit I urged the cotton brokers of Liverpool to buy them 'to arrive.'

"The *Liverpool Albion* copied the letter, and the next day wrote a leader on it, the drift of which was 'don't blame Liverpool,' for other places have parish churches advertised, like beerhouses, for sale as well as Liverpool. The owners of livings, however, describe the advantages and details in their advertisements far more graphically than the owners of beerhouses, because, I suppose, they are more eager to sell. The age of the present holder, the society to be found in the neighbourhood, the price of a return ticket to London (only 3s. 4d. in an advertisement now before me), the stabling, the outhouses, the size of the kitchen garden, the size of the billiard room—in fact, everything that could induce a clergyman with an eye for the comfortable to speculate.

"The *Liverpool Albion* was right when it stated that the blot was not peculiar to Liverpool, for I believe there is not a county in England just now that has not advowsons on sale.

"I have been trying to estimate how many pulpits in the Church of England are in the market to be bought for money or money's worth. . . . There are, roundly stated, 11,500 livings in the Church, but of this number 4800 are in the gift of the Crown, the Bishops, &c., 580 are in the gift of trustees, and in 21 parishes . . . the parishioners are the patrons. These, added together, make 5401 livings which, I should think, cannot be sold, so that the balance of saleable livings must be near 6100, and the lowest estimate of annual value is two millions of money.

"Now, in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* of October 8, there are the following advertisements:—

Rev. W. Powell Jones, 56 Great Russell Street, London, 'has on his books' ..	700 livings.
W. Emery Stark, 27 Bedford Street, has ..	200 "
Mr. Corbett, 70 Camden Road, has ..	400 exchanges and livings.
Mr. Ancona, 8 St. John's, Adelphi, has a list of	88 livings.
Full particulars in <i>Gazette</i>	75 "
Mr. Lara, 4 Palsgrave Place, Strand, gives full details of	13 "
Mr. H. W. Bagster has a register of 42 pages, but only gives details of	21 "

Livings and exchanges, total, advertised 1497

"If, then, there are only 6100 saleable, the proportion adver-

tised publicly in the market is about 22 per cent., or nearly one-fourth. . . . But suppose that half of what is advertised is true, we have the enormous amount of 11 per cent. of the livings of the Church for sale, exclusive of Mr. Bagster's 42 pages and many private sales.

"There are some very large offers in advowsons, of which one or two specimens may be given:—

"2090. Advowson. Kent. House, and nett income, about £1900 a-year. The parish of Yalding is well situated in a beautiful part of Kent, close to a railway station, and within a short ride from Maidstone. There is a comfortable rectory house and out-buildings. The gross income, including value of about 134 acres of glebe and £75 estimated value of the house, amounts to £2421 a-year; rates, land tax, &c., £442 10s.; nett income, say, £1950. Incumbent, 72; price £13,000, of which £7000 must be paid down, and £6000 may remain without interest till a vacancy occurs.'

"The seller of this, according to the 'Clergy List,' is the Ven. F. R. Chapman, Archdeacon of Sudbury, and Vicar of St. James's, Bury St. Edmunds. Now, Sir, you cannot expect me to discuss the action of a holy man like an Archdeacon, who is also a Vicar; but I shall content myself by quoting the opinion expressed last year by the Bishop of Manchester on such a transaction as Archdeacon Chapman advertises. The Bishop said—'The sale of livings is a scandal, an evil, an abuse of a high and *solemn trust*, so pernicious in its influence that every well-wisher of the Church ought to desire its removal. There was no scandal in the Church of England that alienated, and kept alienated, the great Nonconformist bodies from them—bodies whom it should be the desire of every Churchman to bring back to the fold—than the sight of such things as he had mentioned.' I could fill your paper with such 'scandals,' but I only wish to quote one more instance to balance the Archdeacon:—

"VALUABLE ADVOWSON.—For sale, the advowson of the Vicarage of Chatteris, on the borders of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon, with railway station in the parish. There is a good family residence, with suitable offices, out-buildings, &c. The income arises from a corn rent charge, and with the rent of about 320 acres of glebe (almost the whole of which is let under leases), amounts together to about £1720 a-year nett. Incumbent, seventy. Any part, or the whole, of purchase money may be left on security. Principals or solicitors are referred to Mr. Ancona, 8 John Street, Adelphi.'

"What annoys me about the Dissenters is, that they are not much ashamed of their ignorance of such transactions.

"A next presentation, then, is the right to present an incumbent to the living in a certain church when it shall become vacant. Thus, about 1859, Mr. Allen, of Manchester, purchased from Sir R. G. Booth, the patron of Sacred Trinity, Salford, the right to present an incumbent at the first vacancy, and accordingly he presented, in 1860, his son, the Rev. E. Allen. But Sir R. G.

Booth still appears in the 'Clergy List' as the owner of Sacred Trinity, and very possibly has already sold a further presentation of it, the Rev. Mr. Allen's papa having no further right in it beyond the present incumbency. An advowson is the perpetual right to present to a living, and may be transmitted by will to any person, of whatever creed or colour. Thus Mrs. Reiss, of Manchester, purchased from Mr. J. H. James the perpetual right to present to the living of Rock, in Worcestershire, and accordingly she presented, in 1870, her son, the Rev. F. A. Reiss, who is the happy possessor of an income of £1100 per annum, in a parish with 910 souls, who thus pay him about 24s. 2d. each; and Mrs. Reiss is the patroness of Rock. The oath that the Rev. Mr. Allen and the Rev. Mr. Reiss would have to take is as follows:—'I do swear that I have made no simoniacal payment, contract, or promise, directly or indirectly, by myself or by any other to my knowledge, or with my consent, to any person or persons whatsoever, for or concerning the procuring or obtaining of this ecclesiastical place, preferment, office, or living, nor will I, at any time hereafter, perform or satisfy any such kind of payment, contract, or promise, made by any other without my knowledge or consent. So help me God, through Jesus Christ'

"Any one with money, or any company with money, can hold livings in the Church. That eminent Christian, Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, is a patron; Baron Rothschild, a rich Jew, has three livings; Sir H. de Trafford, a Roman Catholic baronet, holds one living; and the Marquis of Bute, another Roman Catholic, holds eleven livings; a baroness has sixteen livings; Jane Hughes of Wales has one; and Miss Jones, from Wales, has two.

"It is very amusing to read the remarks of the different salesmen in their prices current.

"Mr. Ancona hopes 'to limit, as far as practicable, all public notices and advertisements, the objectionable character of which frequently causes *much scandal* and annoyance.'

"Mr. Emery Stark 'reminds his clients of the absolute necessity there exists, whenever a parish is visited, of the object of their visit being kept *strictly private*.'

"Mr. H. W. Bagster 'always quotes the lowest price the seller will name, but is, nevertheless, thankful for reasonable offers; and in no case will he give any information except to principals or their authorised solicitors.'

"But the Rev. Mr. Jones, who 'has 600 livings on his books,' as might be expected in a parson, throws an odour of sanctity over his sales, for he tells us 'it may be asserted with confidence that such sales are demanded in the interests of religion, and that you might as well call the buying and selling of a vacant living magic, as call it after the folly of Simon Magus.'

"By this time you must be tired, your readers will be tired, and so is your obedient servant,

"PROMOTION BY MERIT.

"Manchester, *Nov. 22.*"

As the scandals exposed in the foregoing extracts are generally disapproved of by all earnest Christians, it is to be hoped that the day will not be far distant when the Church of England will clear itself of the disgrace which the toleration of these anti-Christian proceedings, in its midst, undoubtedly implies. The Church of England is the only one in which the sacred trust of a cure of souls is bartered for money, and it is high time good Churchmen, and the Church clergy in particular, showed some desire to abolish it.

Having now glanced at the general aspect of the Christianity of to-day, so far as it is to be found in churches and chapels on the Sabbath, and in the relationship of the various sects one to another on the other days of the week, it only remains to make a few observations upon the daily life of the members of these sects and their bearing, one to another, in matters of every-day life—where religion does not enter into the question.

We have said that almost all Christian sects agree upon the moral teachings of Christ, however much they may differ about the doctrinal teachings; but, although a nominal adhesion is given to practical precepts of Christ, it can hardly be said that modern society lives up to its professions, any more in regard to Christ's moral teachings than it does in regard to doctrinal beliefs. That the clergy are responsible for much of the laxity of modern society in morals, would seem to be a natural inference from their habitual neglect to preach a practical religion. Be the cause what it may, we have the melancholy fact, that the one great sin which Christ came into the world to denounce—the sin of selfishness—is now more prevalent than any other, and yet the clergy scarcely ever dare attack it. Self-

seeking in a thousand forms is the characteristic of the age. Every one is engaged in a perpetual struggle to be rich, and is not too particular as to the means, so that the end be attained. As to conducting business upon the Christian principle of "doing unto others as you would they should do unto you," no one dreams of such a thing. The great aim of every man in trade is to get an advantage over his neighbour—to undersell his competitors even if they be ruined in the struggle; to delude purchasers by all manner of false representations as to quality or quantity; in short, to get wealth on any terms.

Look at the selfishness of the working-classes which the spread of drunkenness implies. The man who prefers to squander his money on his own animal gratifications, instead of making the sacrifice involved in supplying the wants of his wife and children, must be essentially a selfish or self-indulgent man. Then again, look at the selfish unreasonableness of the same class of men in many of their strikes and trades-union regulations, where self-interest too often overrides justice and fair-play. Of course, the same remark applies to their employers too; but much less frequently than to the men. Look at the selfishness of tradesmen and manufacturers generally, who, for the sake of a little extra profit to themselves, undersell and ruin one another, or cheat their customers by selling adulterated articles, or by using false measures. Look, too, at the intense money greed of the publicans, who care not how much want and misery they produce by their vile traffic, so long as they fill their own pockets. They see workmen crowding round their counters and squandering the hard-earned wages which are needed for the support of starving and neglected children at home, and they see the mothers of such children also destroying themselves, body and soul, in the same indulgence; but, to the publican, these are matters of no concern, since his self-interest lies in the other direction. Self-interest, although it is not the active

motive with educated and professional men, is too often, with them, all on the side of vice, disease, strife, bloodshed, and ignorance. The medical man would, of course, repudiate indignantly the insinuation that he rejoiced in the prevalence of disease, so would the military man say of war, and the lawyer of litigation, and the clergyman of sectarian bitterness and religious schisms; but it cannot be denied that their *self-interest* is all in favour of these evils, and that, as a matter of fact, they do not systematically try to reduce them. Medical men do not spread abroad a knowledge of the laws of health, nor do lawyers advise peace, nor soldiers declaim against war, nor the clergy denounce religious difference, and try to unite their followers to other sects. It would be easy to give scores of instances of the unblushing, self-seeking—approaching to the verge of dishonesty—which characterises our learned professions. Amongst medical men—according to the letter of a physician in the *Social Review*—it is quite a common thing for them to lend their names, for the sake of notoriety and a *douceur*, to all manner of quack testimonials and recommendations “with a disregard of discretion, professional honour, and common honesty, disgraceful to them and injurious to the nation.” The press, too, does not scruple to allow self-interest to interfere between the public and men they know to be swindlers—as witness the readiness with which they accept the pay of advertising quacks and swindling bank promoters or betting agents. The selfishness of the wealthy and the aristocratic classes is quite as great as that of the manufacturing and professional classes. Their wealth is used primarily to gratify every conceivable wish of their hearts. We find men and women thinking solely of their own self-indulgence—either in dress, in eating and drinking, in pleasure excursions, balls, dinners, shooting, yachting, hunting, and the thousand-and-one diversions of the rich. With young men it is eating, drinking, dressing, smoking, betting, racing, billiards, plea-

sure-seeking, and "time-killing" in general. Those members of the fashionable world who lack money, often lend their names, for selfish ends, to the promotion of swindles that are intended to impose upon the inexperienced.

There are, of course, thousands of exceptions to these traits of modern society, but it cannot be denied that self-seeking is the rule, and not the exception, in modern Christian society. Even much of the piety and charity which is displayed amongst those whose thoughts are wrapped up in themselves, originates in a selfish desire to "save their own souls," rather than in a spontaneous love of God and disinterested sympathy with the poor and the suffering.

To quote again from the *World*:—"Material prosperity and external peace are the precursors of many a nation's ruin; the love of gain is the lowest of all passions, and the British matter-of-fact money-worship is attaining exuberant proportions."

As we are a manufacturing nation, it is a noteworthy fact, too, that the morality of our leading manufacturers has not escaped censure. It is only quite recently that the *Times* thus remarked upon the subject of the introduction of foreign substances into Manchester goods, in one of the staple trades of the country, in order to give them a false appearance of weight and substance—"It would be hard to take too gloomy a view of a trade which, by the confession of its most prominent members, is vitiated by these systematic frauds." The same paper, in August, 1875, speaking of the state of commercial morality in England, says:—"It is a simple matter of fact that these last twelve months have been marked by a succession of disgraceful scandals. They are scandals in the very matters upon which we most pique ourselves. There is increasing audacity, increasing greed, increasing fraud, increasing impunity, and these are stimulated and fed by increasing indulgence and ostentation."

It would be difficult, in fewer words, to sum up more charges against the Christianity of to-day, as exemplified in the daily life of its members, than are contained in the foregoing paragraph from the leading paper of the country.

There is another of the requirements of Christ: namely, *Inward Purity*, which deserves a passing notice in our estimate of the Christianity of Daily Life. Let the reader refer to the texts headed *Inward Purity*, *Chastity*, and *Good Thoughts*, on pages 37, 43, and 48, *ante*; also those on page 120, and ask himself whether, amongst the men of to-day—the unmarried ones especially—there is any pretence of obedience to these precepts. Is it not notorious that the conversation amongst a very large proportion of the young men of the period is often unfit for the ears of ladies? Those who delight in indecent language can hardly be expected to be very pure in thought; and it would be the sheerest affectation to ignore what every man of the world knows only too well: namely, the utter absence of chastity and purity of thought amongst the majority of the unmarried men of the day. Nor is this confined to the vulgar and uneducated classes. Men who have enjoyed the refining influences of a university education are, it would appear, little better than those of humbler rank in life, if one is to believe all that one hears about the conversation and anecdotes which circulate at mess, amongst English barristers and military men, and in the smoke-rooms of our clubs.

It is beyond the scope of this work—indeed it would require a volume to itself—to expose all the shortcomings of modern Christians in their daily life. There are many who argue that there is plenty of vitality in the Christianity of to-day; and that, too, in a practical form—as witness the earnest self-sacrificing efforts of Christian men to evangelise the masses, or to engage in distant missions to the heathen; or the good work performed by the various sisterhoods connected with our churches; or the splendid charities

which abound on every hand—orphanges, homes, refuges, hospitals, &c. All these, say they, testify to the existence of abundant practical Christianity in our midst, and prove that modern Christians do not neglect Christ's injunctions.

The truth of these statements cannot be gainsaid, though they do not detract from the import of the *other* facts I have alluded to and commented upon. All practical good, to the weak in body or mind, whether in the form of bodily or mental food, is worthy of a follower of Christ; but, as Mr. Greg. has pointed out, the practice of indiscriminate almsgiving may be a real mischief instead of a good; and, in this light, many of our "splendid charities" and much of the bodily food which is recklessly lavished on the poor, by well-meaning philanthropists, is a positive curse to the recipients. As regards the mental food, there is undoubtedly much self-denying effort on the part of earnest but misguided men and women to evangelise the masses—"to save souls," as they phrase it—but in what way do they seek to accomplish this end? Do they preach the salvation of patience, forgiveness, peace, self-denial, love of one another, and faith in God? or do they preach salvation through the "blood of the Lamb"? Is it Christ's *life* or Christ's *death* that they preach? Of what use is it to offer a stone to those who cry for bread?

For people who have lived all their lives in selfish luxury to bestow, in their wills, a sum of money which they cannot take with them out of this world, and the loss of which they therefore no longer feel, when at the point of death, would seem to be an act of very little merit; and yet, it is upon gifts of this kind that most of our overgrown charities thrive. Scarcely a wealthy testator dies without some of our hospitals or our Christian missionary societies being large recipients. These bodies employ paid officials, who presumably regard the post as one which involves no great self-sacrifice on their part. Thus the poor, the sick, and the outcast, scarcely ever come in contact with those who

benefit them by their donations. The gift is too often made when it no longer involves the slightest sacrifice to the donor, or frequently—if made during lifetime—there is no small consolation in the publicity and honour which is courted rather than avoided; whilst, in any case, the philanthropist avoids personal contact with the recipients of his charity, and therefore fails to earn, or perhaps deserve, that gratitude which a few kind words of sympathy or love, would evoke more readily than any amount of indirect donations, through charity officials. In short,—the true test of the prevalence of Christianity is not to be found in the mere evidence of good works, which abound on all hands; for it is needless to remind the reader that “good works,” *per se*, do not prove the benefactor’s title to salvation. There must be the benevolent *motive*—the true sympathy for the wants of others—which prompts a man to give. Without this, the most splendid gifts must count as nothing. The gift of a man who gives a thousand pounds to a local charity, in order that his name may head the published list, and his influence—for election purposes perhaps—be felt in the borough, may swell the list of “splendid charities,” but it can hardly be pointed to as an evidence of the prevalence of true Christianity. When the amount of money has been deducted which has been bestowed by *will*, and the sums that have been given from interested motives are taken into account, the sum total of magnificent charities would be considerably reduced. Such noble examples of practical Christians as the Baroness Burdett Coutts, Mr. Peabody, Miss Octavia Hill, Mr. Ruskin, and others, who give their money in their lifetime, and do not wait until they need it no longer, and its loss will involve no sacrifice, are bright examples of what practical Christianity should be.

The universal habit of leaving money by will, too often implies the existence of a selfishness which cannot bear to make the sacrifice necessary to part with the money during

life; and, on the other hand, it is equally open to the charge of being influenced by fear rather than love. Since modern Christianity offers no alternative between heaven and hell, after death, as the lot of mankind; and, since all sects agree in teaching that almsgiving is one of the requisites of future happiness, as also a lively interest in other people's salvation, it is not surprising that people who feel death approaching, and entertain doubts about the state of their souls, should seek to propitiate the Almighty by liberal donations to the poor, or by a large endowment for a new Church. They can never be quite sure that heaven is to be their undoubted destiny; and it is an easy matter—when the uncertainty of the future begins to press upon them in old age—to delude themselves with the idea that a pecuniary donation for so laudable an object as a Church must needs be a valuable additional safeguard against possible perdition. It may seem uncharitable to impute such motives to testators, but the reluctance which many of them display to give alms whilst they are still capable of enjoying their wealth, lays them open to a charge of selfishness which a very small knowledge of human nature is sufficient to justify.

Making every allowance for these cases, however, it is but just to say that, side by side with the most widespread pride, self-seeking, worldliness, jealousy, hatred, and revenge which modern society undoubtedly displays, there is a considerable leaven of true Christianity both amongst sectarians and amongst outsiders. The most lamentable fact, however, is that the shortcomings which I have just enumerated exist and flourish in the midst of the churches and chapels, and amongst those who make the most ostentatious professions of Christianity, so far as *doctrine* is concerned. They are the loudest in their support of the Church, and the first to take up the cudgels for what they consider to be the glorious truths of the Christian faith—viz., the Thirty-nine Articles and Doctrinal Creeds gener-

ally; but, as regards the inner man, their outer lives give little evidence of purity, charity, and love. The *practical* teachings of Christ they utterly ignore, excepting in one point. They are always willing to satisfy the scruples of conscience by writing out a cheque for a liberal donation to some charity. It involves little trouble, and the sacrifice is *nil*. Hence the charity of the purse flourishes, and is pointed to with pride by the champion of modern Christianity; but of the charity of the heart, they can, we fear, give us little proof in modern society.

CHAPTER XXI.

Final Objections to Mr. Greg's Views.

AS I stated at the commencement of this work, it is not my intention to pull down without building up—to undermine any one's faith and offer them no consolation in return. Whether I have pointed out, in those parts of the New Testament which I have laid most stress upon, a sufficient foundation for a lively faith, is not for me to say; but such at least has been my desire. In concluding my former outline of Mr. Greg's work,* I expressed my regret that he had offered his readers so little in return for what he deprives them of. I will now allude more definitely to the concluding portions of his work. So far as—in the extracts I have availed myself of—he has succeeded in undermining the foundations of the unjust, unchristian, and unreasonable tenets of orthodox Christianity, all sincere believers in the pure Religion of Jesus must be grateful to him; but when he uses the keen edge of his reason to excise such vital and indispensable parts as *the efficacy of prayer*, and *the belief in a future state*, we can only regret the gloomy effect his work is likely to have upon his readers. If I can urge any grounds for declining to accept Mr. Greg's conclusions on these points, I think the increased length which it will give to these pages will not be space misused.

Mr. Greg concludes his work by explaining away or

* Having stated on p. 26 that the whole of the present work was written before the writer saw either Mr. Greg's book or that of Mr. Arnold or Mr. J. S. Mill, I may as well explain that the present Chapter, as also Chapter XI., and many of the foot notes, have been added subsequently.

casting doubt upon the following points of the creed of modern Christians, viz.: the miracles, the speaking in unknown tongues, the resurrection of Christ, and even our own resurrection; also the possibility of inspiration or a Divine revelation, the efficacy of prayer, the desirability of resignation, the possibility of sins being forgiven, the advantage of striving after spirituality, and, finally, in the immortality of the soul.

Whatever apparently in the New Testament is so well authenticated as to be in all probability true, and which, therefore, Mr. Greg has not succeeded in demolishing by sheer force of his reason, he accepts as *fact*, but immediately seeks to explain away on natural grounds. Thus we find that the "speaking with tongues" is a subject which has puzzled Mr. Greg to account for. He associates it with the gift of the Holy Spirit to believers; since, he says, that the most common indication of the Holy Spirit having fallen upon any one was his beginning to "speak with tongues," to utter strange exclamations, unknown words, or words in an unknown tongue. Amongst other examples which Mr. Greg quotes is the case mentioned in Acts 19 : 6, "And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." The allusion to this gift is so frequent that Mr. Greg is unable to doubt that it must have *some* meaning, so he asks, "What, then, was this speaking with tongues?" One theory is, that "it was the power of speaking foreign languages without having learned them—supernaturally, in fact," as stated in Acts 2 : 6. Mr. Greg denies that this was, however, the interpretation in all cases, and considers that the gifts alluded to by Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians do not mean "preaching in a *foreign* language, but in an *unknown* language;—that it consisted of unintelligible and probably incoherent utterances." "To one," says St. Paul (1 Cor. 12 : 8), "is given by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of

knowledge; . . . to another the gifts of healing; . . . to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues." In verse 1 he says, "Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." Verse 4, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit." Again, chap. 14 : 1, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy."

Mr. Greg quotes several extracts from the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of Corinthians which seem to suggest that "speaking in these unknown tongues was becoming vexatious, and bringing discredit on the Church; and he (Paul) labours to discourage it." These extracts help to prepare the way for Mr. Greg's interpretation of this phase of spiritual gifts, which he accordingly disposes of by assuming that numbers of the "weak, mobile, imaginative minds, over excited by the sublimity of the new doctrine expounded to them, . . . passed the faint and undefinable line which separates enthusiasm from delirium, and gave vent to their exaltation in incoherent or inarticulate utterances, which the compassionate sympathy, or the consanguineous fancies, of those around them, dignified with the description of speaking or prophesying in an unknown tongue."

Mr. Greg, having satisfied himself that the gift of tongues was none other than "the ravings of delirium," mistaken as the promptings of the Holy Spirit, proceeds to draw a contrast between the phenomena recorded in the Bible and such as are peculiar to religious excitement in all ages; as, for instance, the ecstasies of Cevennes in France, the convulsionnaires of St. Medard, the Irvingites, and others.

Mr. Greg, in a note, quotes the experiences of a Mr. Baxter, at one time a shining light in Mr. Irving's congregation, who, in a painfully-interesting pamphlet, gives a detailed account of how he spoke with tongues. "It was written after he had recovered; though he never relin-

quished his belief in the supernatural nature of these utterances, but finally concluded them to be from Satan, on the ground of some of the speakers uttering what he thought false doctrine. The description he gives of his own state and that of others," says Mr. Greg, "during the visitation, indicates, in a manner that no physiologist can mistake, a condition of cerebral excitement implying hysteria, and verging on madness, and by no means uncommon. . . . A servant was taken out of his house deranged, and pronounced *by the tongues* to be possessed by a devil. Another speaker with tongues did nothing but utter inarticulate nonsense, with a most revolting expression of countenance. Mr. Baxter says the utterances, which were urged upon him by 'the power,' were sometimes intelligible, sometimes not; sometimes French, sometimes Latin, and sometimes in languages which he did not know, but his wife thought to be Spanish. . . . It is clear to any one who reads Mr. Baxter's candid and unpretending narrative, that a skilful physician would at once have terminated the whole delusion by a liberal exhibition of phlebotomy and anodynes."

This, finally, is Mr. Greg's explanation of the frequent allusion to the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, so often spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles. The whole thing, according to Mr. Greg, was a delusion of an over-excited brain!

Let us consider the attitude which the orthodox Christian must assume in relation to this subject. The believer in the inspiration of the Scriptures is bound to disagree with Mr. Greg in his attempt to explain away these phenomena by natural, as opposed to what is ordinarily called supernatural causes. To assume, as Mr. Greg does, that the physiological explanation covers the whole ground, is to my mind most unwarranted. In Acts 2:4-6, it is distinctly stated that, on the day of Pentecost, the apostles "were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to

speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak *in his own language*, and they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in *our own tongue*, wherever we were born?" See also the succeeding verses, where the various languages are enumerated.

Here, then, according to Mr. Greg, we are to believe that these multitudes were all deluded together. And why? Simply because Mr. Greg has a theory; and, if the statements in the New Testament do not fit in with this theory, so much the worse for the Bible. Mr. Greg accordingly attacks the credibility of Luke, and gives six reasons why there is "much reason to suspect in the whole narrative a mythic element."

The modern orthodox Christian assumes this attitude. He differs with Mr. Greg, inasmuch as he accepts as undoubted facts, the "speaking with tongues" of the New Testament, as well as all the other miracles—which, we shall presently see, Mr. Greg also explains away on natural grounds; but he agrees with Mr. Greg in saying that all modern parallels of the same phenomena are delusions, and can be easily explained away on physiological grounds. In the days of the Apostles, however, he solemnly asserts that God permitted many marvels—the outpouring of the Spirit, miracles, prophesying, &c.—which undoubtedly were supernatural, but that these supernatural visitations have long since ceased to manifest themselves upon earth, and were only required in the days of the Apostles for the purpose of confirming the faith of those whose conversion to Christianity was sought. Now that we have the Bible to look to, says the modern Christian, we require no new revelation of God's power, and therefore he agrees with the scien-

tific sceptic of to-day, explaining away all modern so-called supernatural phenomena as impossible—contrary to the laws of nature, &c.—and not to be believed for a moment. In dealing with the facts of the first century, the modern Christian differs *in toto* with Mr. Greg; but in dealing with the facts of to-day, they are both of one mind.

Since they cannot both be right, I propose here to introduce an explanation from the point of view of the Spiritualist whose arguments, if not convincing, are at least worthy of respectful attention.

The Spiritualist takes a middle course. He differs both from Mr. Greg and the modern Christian. He agrees with the man of science, that there can be nothing supernatural, either in the first century or in the nineteenth century; that the laws of nature are the laws of God, and, as such, are eternal and unalterable. The Spiritualist is not obliged to reject well-attested facts as impossible, and therefore false. He agrees with the man of science in saying that they can be *naturally* explained, but he differs in his views of natural laws. He agrees with the man of science in saying that what occurred in the first century must have occurred according to nature's laws, or could not have occurred at all; and, if it did happen in such wise, it could therefore be repeated in the present day, by the operation of the same laws. In short, he admits the phenomena of the speaking with tongues, the possession by devils, the healing by touch, the re-appearance of the dead, the spirit voices, the spirit lights, opening of prison doors, the carrying away of Philip to Azotus, the gift of "discerning of spirits," and, in fact, all the well-attested marvels of the Bible. All these he accepts, for the very sound reason, that he or others have witnessed them in the present day amongst the spiritually gifted of his co-believers, and therefore why should he doubt the possibility of the Bible narratives being true? Mr. Greg would of course reply that all these modern parallel cases

are explainable in the same way, namely, on physiological grounds. Mesmerism, optical illusion, unconscious cerebration, psychic force—all these weapons of the modern *savans* are supposed to have explained away so-called modern miracles; but, strange to say, the belief in them spreads, and that, too, among hard-headed freethinkers who previously rejected everything which Mr. Greg rejects, and perhaps a little more. Now, the mistake which, I think, the scientific man makes is to assume too intimate a knowledge of the laws of nature. He calmly assumes that he knows the limits of nature's powers, and therefore any event which does not come within his experience is, *ipso facto*, *supernatural*—a convenient word for characterising anything which is superscientific. Virtually, he says to the orthodox Christian—as well as to the Spiritualist—"We know all about the laws of nature—is it not written in the books of Huxley, Tyndall, and Co.?—and, since *we* never saw such marvels as those you believe in, you may rest assured they *cannot be true!*"
Verdict: *delusion!*

We can respect the consistency—though we cannot admire the conceit—of the scientific man; but what are we to say of the orthodox Christian who believes that Paul advised us to "desire spiritual gifts," and also that all these marvels really occurred eighteen centuries ago but are not *permitted* by the Almighty to occur now-a-days? This assumption of a knowledge of the intentions of the Almighty, is even more offensive than the conceit of the scientific assumption of an omniscient acquaintance with nature's laws.

Both the modern Christian and the scientific sceptic deny the facts which the Spiritualist relies on, and therefore have no common ground for discussion with the latter.

I have already alluded to the works where these alleged facts are reported, and, as it is beyond the scope of this work to enter into the question of their truthfulness, I

cannot do more here than refer both disputants to those authorities.* Certainly, if Mr. Greg admits that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in his philosophy, he may be disposed to pay more respectful attention to these possible explanations of well authenticated phenomena, which he labours so painfully to explain away on other grounds.

Without going into the question of the truthfulness of the facts relied on by the Spiritualist, I may be permitted here to show how much more reasonable is his explanation of the phenomena Mr. Greg puzzles over, than that advanced in the *Creed of Christendom*.

The Spiritualist believes in the continuance of life after death, because, he says, he has succeeded in communicating with persons who have cast off their earthly or natural bodies, and exist only in the spiritual body described by St. Paul in 1 Cor. chap. 15 ("there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body"). This communication is effected in various ways; but, as it is only possible for spirits to communicate with us through a physical organism, and as they have no longer a material organism of their own, they are obliged to do so through the organism of a person still in the flesh—otherwise a sensitive, or medium—and one of the modes by which spirits do so is to *entrance the medium, and use his bodily organs of speech to express words to mortals once again*. This spirit-control is only a well regulated form of spirit-possession, so frequently alluded to in the Bible.

Analogous cases, from facts in connection with mesmerism, are quoted to support the Spiritualists' theory; as, for example, the instances certified to by the late Professor Gregory of a strong will controlling the weaker will of a mesmeric subject, previously entranced, and compelling him unconsciously to do and say things which the operator wills him to say or do. Here, says the Spiritualist, you have an

* See Appendix.

instance of one mind using the physical organism of another person to speak and act through. To all intents and purposes, the mesmeric subject is possessed by the mind or will or spirit of the operator, precisely as is the Spiritualist medium by the mind or will of a disembodied spirit. The mesmeric patient—expressing the thoughts of an external (but in his case) visible intelligence—might be said to be *speaking in a strange tongue*. When, therefore, the controlling intelligence is no longer a person in the flesh, but is a so-called disembodied spirit, the medium may likewise be said to be speaking in an unknown tongue; and if the controlling spirit had been a foreigner, the medium would be impelled to speak or write in a foreign language. Such instances are said to have frequently occurred amongst Spiritualists, and are well known and abundantly recorded in the periodical and other literature of the movement. As these facts are as calmly ignored by the press and the scientific world, as the Bible phenomena are calmly explained away by Mr. Greg, it is hardly to be wondered at that the public generally should have formed no other opinion upon them than the “delusion” theory of their scientific teachers.

The scientific objector will doubtless answer that the Spiritualist *assumes* the immortality of the soul to support his plausible theory; but this is not so. He asserts that there are various modes by which the departed can communicate with mortals; and that speaking and writing through unconscious mediums are only two of these phases. Even, however, through these means, abundant testimony to prove that the supposed spirit-control is really what it is assumed to be, is adduced by the Spiritualists, since they allege that, in numerous instances, facts have been communicated touching the life experiences and connections of the supposed spirit, which were entirely unknown, either to the medium or to any person present, and which have only, by subsequent verification, been proved to be correct. By these

and similar means, says the Spiritualist, we are able to prove that they are disembodied spirits, who "speak with unknown tongues" through our mediums, and we defy science to give any other explanation which will cover the whole ground. When the control by the spirit is imperfect, through the mediumship not being properly developed, or when evil spirits get control of a sensitive, the phenomena which are witnessed will have all the appearances which you characterise as proof of lunacy, or the morbid excitement of an over-wrought brain. A powerful mesmerist can, and frequently has succeeded in curing so-called cases of insanity, by driving out the evil spirit, as is recorded of Christ. Many cases which your medical men send to lunatic asylums, are neither more nor less than cases of imperfect or vicious spirit-control, or "possession."

The Spiritualist urges that there is nothing unreasonable or impossible in what he advances. If the immortality of the soul be admitted, what can be more certain than that the will-power, the mind, and the affections, will survive death? What, again, could be more natural than to suppose, that those who have left this earth will be drawn to it by ties of affection or hate, and seek to gratify those feelings by controlling the minds of sensitives, for good or evil purposes, just as we have seen the man in the body can do? The Christian knows nothing of the immediate destiny of the soul after death, the Church being confessedly ignorant on the subject (see p. 212 *ante*); and cannot deny the possibility of men still clinging to the earth-life; and, even if they do deny it, says the Spiritualist, *theories cannot stifle facts.*

Whatever view the reader may adopt in reference to the foregoing subject, it cannot be denied that the Spiritualist's explanation is quite as reasonable as that of Mr. Greg, who calmly assures us that "Jesus appears to have held erroneous views respecting demoniacal possession," because, in another part, Mr. Greg assumes that the persons mentioned

in the Bible, as being possessed by demons, (*i.e.*, evil spirits) "were lunatic and epileptic patients, and that Jesus (or the narrators who framed the language of Jesus throughout the synoptical gospels) shared the common belief that these maladies were caused by evil spirits inhabiting the bodies of the sufferers." . . . "The conception of the evangelists clearly was, that Jesus derived honour from the early recognition of his Messianic character by hostile spirits of a superior order of Intelligences; but *to us, who know (!)* that these supposed superior Intelligences were really unhappy men whose natural intellect had been perverted and impaired, the effect of the narratives becomes absolutely reversed."

The cool assumption of ignorance and error on the part of Christ is characteristic of Mr. Greg's style of argument in relation to all matters of which he himself is (or shall we say *may be?*) ignorant. Clearly, if there be any truth in Spiritualism, Mr. Greg is lamentably wrong; and may have to amend many of the conclusions which he has come to in the fourth edition of the "Creed of Christendom."

Then again, in reference to Mr. Baxter's experiences amongst the Irvingites. Let the reader admit for a moment the possibility of the Spiritual theory being true, and then glance back at Mr. Baxter's narrative, and he will at once see how completely this explanation covers the whole ground, and how weak are Mr Greg's conclusions about the "delusion." "A servant was taken out of his house deranged, and *pronounced by the tongues to be possessed by a devil.*" Mr. Baxter, of course, says he was "deranged." Again, "Mr. Baxter says the utterances which were urged upon him by *the power (!)* were sometimes intelligible, sometimes not; sometimes French, sometimes Latin, and *sometimes in languages which he did not know*, but which his wife thought to be Spanish."

I wish the reader to bear in mind that this narrative is not one which I have sought out for the purpose of illus-

trating any pet theory of my own. It is adduced by Mr. Greg in support of his own theory—namely, delusion; and is actually urged by him as reasonably supporting the conclusion, that because he assumes *this* case to be all delusion, therefore the Bible narratives were so also, and Christ, or his reporters, were equally deluded!

Let us now turn to Mr. Greg's remarks on miracles, which he explains away in the same easy fashion that the foregoing phenomena are disposed of. My space prevents me from doing more than give Mr. Greg's conclusions. His reasoning the reader must follow out for himself.

Mr. Greg's opinion is, "that the miracles spoken of in the New Testament were probably either remarkable occurrences elevated into supernatural ones by the general supernaturalistic tendencies of the age, or examples of wonderful healing powers, the original accounts of which have become strangely intermingled and overlaid with fiction in the process of transmission."

Assuming that they were true, Mr. Greg goes on to argue—and in this I quite agree with him—that the possession of what he calls "superhuman" power does not necessarily imply the possession of superhuman knowledge, and the will truly to impart that knowledge. Indeed, urges he, the power to work miracles "may imply the very opposite" of divine knowledge. Power, says Mr. Greg, "is not in itself divine; it may be devilish."

The New Testament, and also the Old, show that the power of working miracles was common in those days, and did not, *ipso facto*, prove the possessor of the power to be more than human; indeed, in Matthew, as Mr. Greg points out, we find it stated: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and *shall shew great signs and wonders*; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." In Matthew 12 : 27, and Mark 9 : 38, "Christ clearly admits the power to work miracles in both his enemies and his ignorers." Mr. Greg cites Acts 8 : 9-11 ;

13 : 6-10 ; 16 : 16 ; 2 Cor. 11 : 13, to prove that, "by the early Christians, the possession of the miraculous or prophetic gift was not considered inconsistent both with false doctrine and enmity to Christ's Church."

The burden of Mr. Greg's objection to miracles is, that they are or may—"in the process of time, and the triumphant career of scientific inquiry—be reduced, as so many thousand prodigies have been reduced to a natural occurrence." To say that it can never be so explained away is, says he, "to assume that the limits of human power and knowledge are indisputably known to us." In short, Mr. Greg believes miracles could not be *supernatural* occurrences, and therefore they could never have occurred ; or they are not correctly described, being merely such phenomena as the physiologists of to-day are familiar with.

It seems to me that Mr. Greg's attempt to explain away the miracles, is as weak as his effort to dispose of the phenomena already alluded to—"the speaking with tongues"—and involves the very assumption which he so loudly protests against, namely, that our modern *savans* are omniscient in the matter of nature's laws ; and, because they declare the re-animation of a dead man, or the instantaneous cure of blindness, deafness, insanity, and other diseases, to be impossible, since they have not come within their limited experience, therefore such phenomena are *supernatural*, and consequently not facts. As I have already admitted, the assumption that they were supernatural would render them impossible of credence ; but, assuming them to be really *natural* phenomena, occurring through the operation of laws of nature we are, as yet, unacquainted with,—analogous, it may be, to some of the marvels which happen amongst Spiritualists now-a-days—there would be no need to make such desperate efforts to prove that the alleged facts never happened, or to explain them away as distorted accounts of commonplace events.

Again, we see the Churchman and the man of science at

issue. The former believes the miracles were supernatural phenomena, which cannot be repeated now-a-days. The man of science says, if they were supernatural, they could never have happened; and if they really did occur, they could be repeated now-a-days; and since we know that this is impossible, it is clear they never occurred! Here again, it seems to me, that the Spiritualist occupies firmer ground than either of the disputants. He admits, on the one hand, that the phenomena were simply *natural* events occurring in accordance with, not in opposition to, nature's laws; but by virtue of powers we are still very ignorant of, and only beginning to understand. Nevertheless, similar symptoms of mysterious powers have been developed in specially gifted persons in our day, called mediums; and although, probably, none such possess the extraordinary spiritual powers which Christ possessed, yet the existence of these gifts to-day suggests the great probability that similar, though evidently more marvellous gifts, might have belonged to Christ. In short, without pretending to draw any parallel between Christ's miraculous powers and the healing gifts which some modern mediums are said to possess, it is a fair deduction that, *if there be any truth in the phenomena of to-day, there may have been truth in the miraculous events which Mr. Greg and other writers throw so much doubt upon.* The scientific view is certainly more consistent than that of the Churchman. Science argues that such events do not occur to-day, and could not have occurred then. If they could once admit that such or similar phenomena do happen now-a-days, I have no doubt they would be equally ready to amend their criticism of the Bible miracles.

Science has already made some concessions towards the miraculous. About twenty years ago, Mesmerism was looked upon as all delusion and quackery, and no scientific man, with a reputation to lose, would associate his name with it. Now, we actually find scientific critics of the Bible miracles arguing that *Mesmerism* explains most of the so-called

miraculous cures which the gospels narrate! Perhaps when the phenomena of Spiritualism have survived the delusion and quackery stage, some of its facts may be urged by scientific men, as affording a natural explanation of the remaining miracles.

Be this as it may, it is worth while to point out that the Spiritualist can endorse another of Mr. Greg's arguments, namely, that miraculous powers do not imply a divine agency, but may be devilish. This the Spiritualist readily admits; since many persons, now-a-days endowed with mediumistic gifts, are, in their moral character, no better, and frequently much worse, than their neighbours. The gift appertains to the *body*, not to the *mind*. If the moral character be good, it may be used for good purposes, just as physical strength may be; but, where moral principle is absent, it may be as readily abused. This, says the Spiritualist, is the reason why at some ill-regulated séances phenomena occur which some good people consider of Satanic origin. God is no respecter of persons. The ignorant and the vicious in the other world are permitted—subject, of course, to the laws of nature—to communicate through or control mediumistic persons, and produce spiritual phenomena, just as freely as are the higher and purer intelligences. It is true that the abuse of Spiritual séances is more frequently trumpeted abroad by enemies to the movement, than the good resulting from them; but, nevertheless, it is perfectly true, says the Spiritualist, that the possession of these powers is quite as consistent with evil moral principles in the agent for their production, as it is with good principles.

The reader must not assume that the phenomena of modern Spiritualism are a re-appearance of miraculous events after a silence of eighteen hundred years. Such a supposition would prove a strong argument against their probability. The Spiritualist, on the contrary, admits that, if they occur—as he alleges they do—in accordance with

nature's laws, these laws must have been in operation in all ages and at all times; and, he maintains, that history proves this to be the case, and that similar phenomena to those of to-day have indeed been recorded in all times past. He instances the miraculous events of the Old Testament; the oracles and sibyls of ancient Greece and Rome; the sorcery and witchcraft of the middle ages; and the innumerable examples of monkish miracles, ghost stories, presentiments, visions, house hauntings, second sight, &c.; also the inexplicable performances of Indian jugglers, as amongst the various forms in which these spiritual powers have manifested themselves in certain individuals in former times.

Mr. Greg has a chapter on the Resurrection of Jesus, wherein he throws doubt upon that event, so far as the Gospel narrative is concerned.

Mr. Greg's analysis of the Bible narrative of this occurrence certainly shows that the facts are very inaccurately recorded. He sums up by showing that the narratives differ in almost every detail of the circumstances connected with Christ's alleged re-appearance. They differ as to the number of women who saw the apparition; as to the number of persons who appeared; as to the words spoken by the apparitions; as to the parties to whom Jesus appeared, and also as to the locality. Mr. Greg concludes that the discrepancies he points to utterly invalidate the narratives "as evidence of anything, except the currency and credit of such stories among Christians thirty years after the death of Christ."

Mr. Greg admits that the Apostles *believed* in Christ's resurrection with absolute conviction; but he himself does not pledge himself to any of the popular explanations—which go to show that either Jesus was not dead when removed from the cross, or the apparition was a vision, or the disciples mistook some passing individual for their crucified Lord.

Mr. Greg contends that if Christ re-appeared to his disciples in his earthly body, it cannot be contended that this resurrection is a type or foreshadowing of our own resurrection, since it is undeniable that our physical bodies—after having crumbled into dust and passed into other combinations, and become in turn the bodies of other animals—can never again be re-animated. The Church contends otherwise, it is true; but there is no reasonable foundation for such a contention, and even Scripture is against it. If, therefore, Christ did re-appear, argues Mr. Greg, it must have been with a spiritual, not a material body; and, in that case, his re-appearance must have been in a vision—subjective, not objective—as he appeared to Paul. Such a supposition would, admits Mr. Greg, *pro tanto*, countenance the idea of a future state.

On the other hand, we find that the Church holds quite different views touching the resurrection, and Mr. Greg quotes "Pearson on the Creed" to the effect, that "the same body, not any other, shall be raised to life which died; that the same flesh which was separated from the soul at the day of death shall be united to the soul at the last day."

Between these two disputants I should like once more to show how much more reasonable is the Spiritualist's theory, and how entirely, too, it accords with Scripture on the one hand, and Mr. Greg's position on the other.

The Spiritualist contends that the soul—"the ego"—dwells in an external form called the spirit-body, which latter, again, dwells in and controls the natural body, and that death is merely a severing of this connection between the natural and the spiritual body, leaving the *ego*, with its external spiritual form, a self-conscious identity as before, but minus the bodily organism through which it had been in the habit of expressing itself in the material world. At death, therefore, the real man rises from the worn-out body, and this, says the Spiritualist, is the *true resurrection*, and no other can or will take place.

Let us glance at the Scripture confirmation of this theory. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 15, St. Paul says of the resurrection of the dead : "Some men will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? . . . Thou sowest not that body which shall be; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption—it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. *There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* . . . Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

Where Paul got his information from, I know not; whether he was inspired, and his utterances are to be regarded as a Divine revelation, the reader must judge for himself; but it is a singular fact, that this dictum of St. Paul exactly fits in with the Spiritual revelations of to-day—if such the reader is willing to regard them. Whatever opinion the reader may have on this matter, it is difficult to conceive how any one can deny that the theory of St. Paul and the Spiritualists is infinitely more reasonable than the preposterous theories propounded in such works as "Pearson on the Creed."

Dr. Nichols of Malvern, in his admirably written and popular work, entitled "Human Physiology," makes the following remarks on this subject:—"We know," says he, "too little of matter, or of what constitutes the individual identity of man, to say that the dogma of the Resurrection, as explained by St. Paul, is impossible. It may be as natural as the metamorphoses of insects; and the matter of which our outer bodies is composed at any period of life, or at the time of death, may have nothing to do with it. The testimony to the fact that the spirits of the departed sometimes take visible and palpable forms, clothe themselves, so to speak, with matter, or with force which impresses our senses as matter, is overwhelming; and if we admit the immortality of the soul, we cannot reasonably

deny the possibility and even the probability that it may resume not the gross and corruptible body, changing from day to day, but its real, substantial, and identical body, of the true nature of which we may be able to form little conception."

Indeed, a moment's reflection must satisfy anyone that immortality is impossible, according to our conception of a future life, without supposing that we shall have a bodily form. Without this we could have no satisfactory evidence of our own or others' identity, and the first essential to our happiness—the recognition and communion with those loved ones who have "gone before"—would be impossible. Most people have very vague notions regarding the conditions of the future life. At one time (as we have seen in the Church Hymns) they look upon the soul as detached from the mouldering body—waiting for the general resurrection—as a "vital spark"—an incomprehensible essence—whilst, at another, they talk of their friends as being already angels in heaven, clothed in white and possessed of wings.

Upon the theory of a spiritual counterpart to the earthly body, and upon the assumption that there can be no material resurrection, all the scientific objections to the orthodox view vanish, and St. Paul can be reconciled with common sense and the alleged facts of modern revelations. The re-appearance of the departed, in shadowy counterparts of their earthly bodies—of which abundant testimony exists for those who care to make themselves acquainted with it*—also fits in with this theory.

The Spiritualist, however, would not hold with Mr. Greg, that the reappearance of Christ was necessarily *subjective*, even on the theory of a spiritual body; for those who have read the reports of recent spirit phenomena in the *Spiritualist*, and also the work of Mr. Crookes, F.R.S., must be aware that—whether true or not—it is alleged that these

* See "Glimpses of the Supernatural," by the Rev. F. G. Lee. London: Harrison, 38 Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, W.C.

departed spirits can and do re-clothe themselves *pro tem.* in a *materialised* form, the component atoms of which are subsequently disintegrated in a manner which, as yet, baffles our comprehension to explain.

Assuming, therefore, for a moment, that there *may* be truth in these statements,—and the testimony of men like Mr. Crookes, Mr. Wallace, Professor Barrett, and others, is at least worthy of respect by those who have not investigated the phenomena for themselves—it is quite conceivable that Christ *may* have re-appeared in a material form to his disciples; and that, therefore, Mr. Greg *may* be wrong again, in assuming that his re-appearance must be taken as a *subjective*, not an *objective* vision. I should be sorry to draw any parallel between the powers of Christ and those with which modern mediums are said to be gifted. Indeed, I anticipate that many persons may raise a cry of “Blasphemy!” in connection with what has been said; but the more sober-minded will not need to be reminded, that the bare possibility of there being some as yet undiscovered laws, by which such phenomena can be reproduced in our day, helps immensely the belief in the possibility of such events having happened eighteen hundred years ago, in an age when miraculous phenomena were common, and the conditions therefore favourable for developing such hidden powers. In the middle ages, all such phenomena, outside the Church, were stamped out as witchcraft and sorcery. Inside the Church, they were “miracles,” and the mediums were “saints.” Now-a-days, in spite of the narrowness, intolerance, and persecution of both Science on the one hand, and the Church on the other, the investigation of these hidden mysteries is permitted to progress.

Having disposed of the miracles and the resurrection of Christ, Mr. Greg proceeds to discuss the question of inspiration, the efficacy of prayer, the forgiveness of sins, and the immortality of the soul. As these are questions on which I venture to think I may throw some additional light—

even by aid of the despised facts of modern Spiritualism—I must once more proceed to quote Mr. Greg.

In his chapter, *Is Christianity a Revealed Religion?* Mr. Greg seems to me to labour in one part to show that there was no Divine revelation in Christianity, and that it might all have originated with man; whilst, in other parts, he uses expressions which appear to contradict his own arguments.

Mr. Greg sets himself to answer the question, "Is Christianity to be regarded as a Religion revealed by God to Man through Christ?" and he answers it in the negative, chiefly because he considers (p. 176) that it does not contain "anything which a genius like Christ's, brought up and nourished as his had been, might not have disentangled for itself." Again (p. 169), he has "no hesitation in concluding that a pure and powerful mind, filled with warm affections and devotional feelings, and studying the Hebrew Scriptures *discriminately*, appropriating and assimilating what was good and noble, and rejecting what was mean and low, could and might *naturally* arrive at the conclusion which Jesus had reached, as to the duties of men, the attributes of God, and the relation of man to God."

What Mr. Greg means by *naturally*, as opposed to *supernaturally*, in regard to Revelation, I am at a loss to understand; but he is evidently opposed to the idea that the truths of Christianity owe their origin to any external intelligence to that of Jesus Christ. "On their face," says he, "this is evident; for we know that Christ was mistaken, as also were his disciples, upon many points. He appears," says Mr. Greg, "to have held erroneous views respecting demoniacal possession." This must certainly seem rather a cool assumption from the point of view of those who say they *know* that spirit possession is a fact in the present day. There are, however, the predicted second coming of Christ, and the approaching end of the world: both errors—as far as we can see—and such as Christ apparently did fall into.

Not only, as we have seen, does Mr. Greg contend that there is nothing in Christianity, *per se*, which suggests a Divine origin, but he proceeds to strengthen his position by arguing, that—whether there be much evidence or not, it is *impossible that anything could be so revealed to man*. After stating his arguments, he thus sums up :—"Our reflections bring us to this conclusion—that the only certain proof we can have of a revelation must lie in the truths it teaches, being such as are inaccessible to, and therefore incomprehensible by, the mind of man ; that *if they are such as he can conceive and grasp and accept, they are such as he might have discovered, and he has no means of knowing that he has not discovered them ; if they are such as he could not have discovered, they are such as he cannot receive, such as he could not recognise or ascertain to be truth.*"

In support of his position, Mr. Greg quotes the following extract from one of our acutest writers :—"A truth is a real and actual relation of things subsisting somewhere—either in the ideas within us, or the objects without us—and capable, therefore, of making itself clear to us by evidence either demonstrative or moral. We may not yet have advanced to the point of view from which it opens upon us ; but a progressive knowledge must bring us to it, and we shall then see that which hitherto was sustained by authority, resting on its natural support ; we shall behold it, indeed, in the same light in which it has all along appeared to the superior Intelligence who tendered it to our belief. *Thus revelation is an anticipation only of science : a forecast of future intellectual and moral achievements.*"

Let us illustrate these propositions by the case of a party of voyagers travelling to a distant land—say from the south of Asia to the north—where they would meet with startling phenomena such as they could not realise from their own experience in their warmer climate—as, for instance, the solidification of water so as to enable men and horses to walk on its surface. Were such a party to

send on a pioneer to report to them what he had seen, his report would be exactly a parallel revelation to them which Christ's revelations touching the future life are to us. When the travellers had (in the words of Mr. Greg's authority) "advanced to the point of view from which the truth opens to them, . . . they will see that which hitherto was sustained by authority," *i.e.*, the authority of their pioneer, "resting on its natural support." But here Mr. Greg steps in with his proposition—"If the truths are such as they could not have discovered, they are such as they cannot receive, such as they could not recognise or ascertain to be truth!" Obviously Mr. Greg's proposition here fails in its application, for they would and could receive and believe the statements of their messenger.

To return to the parallel case of a revelation touching the future life. Assuming for a moment that Christ did re-appear to his disciples after death, or that departed spirits can and do return now-a-days and describe their experiences in the life beyond the grave, are these not exactly parallel cases to the pioneer traveller? and yet Mr. Greg must admit that such revelations are constantly accepted by minds on earth and firmly believed to be true, in spite of the undeniable fact that men can never discover the facts of the future life for themselves until they actually arrive there.

May not a revelation be equally possible of new truths in morals and physical science? A teacher reveals to his pupils truths in connection with physical science or moral laws which are new to them. Of course they may in time test his statements for themselves, but meanwhile they take them on trust. Strange to say, Mr. Greg, in another part of this work (p. 189), admits this himself when speaking of the reception of the truths of Christianity by those who are too poor, ignorant, uneducated, or busy, to work out these truths for themselves—"Their *creeds*, *i.e.*, their collection of dogmas, those who do not or cannot think for themselves

must always take on the authority of others. *They do so now: they have always done so.* They have hitherto believed certain doctrines, because wise and good men assure them that these doctrines were revealed by Christ, and that Christ was a Teacher sent from God. *They will in future believe them because wise and good men assure them of their truth, and their own hearts confirm the assurance."*

I do not see how Mr. Greg reconciles the concluding words of the foregoing paragraph with his previous conclusion, that if truths "are such as man could not have discovered, they are such as he cannot receive, such as he could not recognise or ascertain to be truth."

What Mr. Greg understands by the "revelation" we learn on page 167, where he says that a Christian believes the doctrines which Christ taught "were directly and supernaturally communicated to Him from on high," and not worked out *naturally*, as Mr. Greg alleges, in His own brain.

Much of the confusion of ideas which—with all respect to Mr. Greg's clearness and force of reasoning—I cannot help thinking he displays in the latter part of his work, arises, it would appear, from his assuming that a revelation to man must needs be *supernatural*. What if it can be shown to be the most reasonable and natural of processes? It seems to be possible—by once more calling in the aid of Spiritualism—to advance an explanation of revelation that must commend itself to most minds as infinitely more rational than Mr. Greg's assumption of a supernatural intervention in every case of the kind.

Assuming once again for the purpose of our argument—and this Mr. Greg himself admits—that there *may* be a future state, what can possibly be more natural than to suppose that, after death, we shall be influenced by the habits of mind and modes of thought acquired during our life on earth? Is it conceivable that a man can readily give up the thoughts he has constantly dwelt on for years? The thoughts he has indulged in—be they good or bad—will

most likely continue to be his thoughts, after his change from this life to the next. If he be of the earth earthy, his thoughts will inevitably draw him to the persons and things of his earthly life. So with the noble and the good. The true philanthropist will, in all probability, continue to take an interest in the welfare of his fellow-men, who are learning their first lesson in life here on earth; and his enlarged capacities for acquiring knowledge will teach him many lofty and valuable truths concerning the progress of humanity, which, if it were possible for him to communicate to us, might be of infinite service to mankind. So again the affection which a mother has for her offspring must, in all reasonable probability, attract her to those she loves—unless, indeed, we assume the dreadful idea, that death destroys all ties of kin and friendship. She will delight in watching over and guarding her children, and in warning them of dangers and sins. That there will be these inclinations to communicate—for good or bad purposes—once more with those on earth, seems to me quite reasonable and probable. Why, then, should we assume that it is impossible? Why assume that there is no means of communicating except by *objective* signs and sounds. Many such there have been, if the overwhelming weight of testimony which we possess, be worthy of our attention. May we not then assume that many inexplicable presentiments, unaccountable warnings of conscience, or sudden internal promptings to do or not to do certain things, as also some startling ideas which “strike” us unaccountably, and appear to have no connection with our own train of thought—may not these be some of the methods of communication between the spiritual and the material? and, if so, why may not these be legitimately termed “inspirations” and “revelations”? The difficulty which Mr. Greg falls into seems to be in first assuming that all inspirations must be *supernatural*; and, secondly, that they must be direct communications from the Almighty to man. Surely the millions

of beings in the next life are just as much God's creatures as we are? "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" So says St. Paul; and, if we assume that God employs great men on earth—like Christ, Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, Plato, &c.—as prophets or messengers, through whom to elevate and improve His creatures on earth, why may He not continue to employ them, after death, as ministering spirits? Is it unlikely that Christ ceases to take any interest in humanity now on this earth? We profess to be believers in the immortality of the soul, and yet we forget very often, that Christ is as much alive and in our midst now-a-days as he was eighteen hundred years ago. It seems to me much more reasonable to suppose that God reaches all men through those who are immediately above them in spiritual growth; and that the love of humanity which prompts men to do good is a Divine prompting, percolating, it may be, through infinite grades of "ministering spirits" in a descending scale of development, from the highest to the lowest.

Be this as it may, I wish to show that Mr. Greg has himself admitted all that I contend for. Here are his words: "We are all conscious of thoughts which *come to us*—which are not, properly speaking, *our own*—which we do not create, do not elaborate; flashes of light, glimpses of truth, or of what seems to us such, brighter and sublimer than commonly dwell in our minds, *which we are not conscious of having wrought out by any process of inquiry or meditation*. These are frequent, and brilliant in proportion to the intellectual gifts and spiritual elevation of the individual: they may well be termed inspirations—revelations; but it is not such as these that we mean when we speak of the Revelation by Christ."

Here we have, in Mr. Greg's own words, an admission of the possibility of our receiving thoughts *from without*, which, it seems to me, entirely fits in with the Spiritualists'

theory of a future life, but with no other. Why, after making this admission, Mr. Greg should abandon it and start off on another chase by saying, "*This is not what we mean when we speak of the Revelation by Christ,*" I am at a loss to understand. It seems to me that it is *quite* consistent with what the Church means. The theory propounded about such thoughts emanating from superior intelligences in the other world, would be quite consistent with the belief that Christ's inspiration came from so high a Being as the Almighty Himself. Indeed, Mr. Greg unwittingly admits it himself, in another part of his work, where, at p. 168, he writes of Christ as "*surpassing all men of all times in the closeness and depth of his communion with the Father.*" (!) So also later on, when he comes to deal with the doctrine of a future life—after exhausting all that reason can say *against* it, he concludes—"The truth we believe to be, that a future existence is, and must be, a matter of *information* or *intuition*, not of *inference*. The intellect may imagine it, but could never have *discovered* it, and can never prove it; the soul must have revealed it—*must, and does perpetually reveal it.*" (!)

In other parts, Mr. Greg also admits the existence of certain "spiritual instincts, which we believe to be the voice of God in the soul, which infuse into the mind a sense of our relation to Him, and a hope of future existence." And further on, when coming to the question of the efficacy of prayer, which, of course, he resists on rational grounds, he concludes with the admission, that "*we feel an internal voice* more potent and persuasive than reason, which assures us, that to pray to Him in trouble is an irrepressible instinct of our nature."

Again, I say, I do not see how Mr. Greg reconciles all those admissions with the statement on p. 172—"That no doctrine can be taught by God to man—be supernaturally infused, that is, into his mind—which he might not by the employment of his own faculties have discerned or elicited."

If Christ did commune with the Father, Mr. Greg seems to argue, that what he gave us as the result of that communing, was no more than what he might have found out for himself; and, secondly, it was impossible that anything *could* have been so revealed to Christ which he could not have evolved for himself. In spite of this he talks of the Religion of Jesus, p. 193, as containing "more truth than has ever yet been *given to man*."

Assuming, in this connection, that Paul's description of the spiritual and the natural body and the resurrection of the former *be* a fact, it seems to me that he could never have discovered the fact for himself without something very like a revelation from the other world. Neither could the modern Spiritualist. Nor do I see how men could discover for themselves the value or necessity of prayer to God.

Mr. Greg argues that the Old Testament *contained* all that Christ taught, and that he might have arrived at all his conclusions from a discriminating study of that Book. This difficulty, however, vanishes at once on the Spiritualist's theory of inspiration; for, according to this assumption, all good men in all ages have been more or less in communion with the spirit-world, and have received truths from God through his ministering spirits. It seems to me rather inconsistent for Mr. Greg to admit in one page that Christ was in *closer and deeper communion with the Father than all other men of all times*, and then tell us that, as the result of that communion, he taught us nothing new, nothing which we could not have discovered for ourselves!

Whilst disagreeing with Mr. Greg *in toto* on the nature and possibility of a Divine revelation to man, I cordially agree with all he says upon the question of Christ's divinity, and think that no sensible man, who is willing to exercise his reason on the subject and has mind enough to understand it, can fail to admit that Mr. Greg's conception of Christ's character and credentials is as lofty and as reverential as that of the most pious Churchman. Indeed, here

again I am considerably puzzled to reconcile Mr. Greg's various statements—his enthusiasm for Christ's character, with his laborious and (I think) unsatisfactory attempts to prove that Jesus taught us nothing which any man similarly endowed could not have discovered from the materials before him.

In one part he calls the author of the Christian precepts "the one towering perpetual miracle of history," whilst elsewhere he calls him "the most exalted genius whom God ever sent upon the earth ; in himself an embodied revelation ; humanity in its divinest phase, God manifest in the flesh." Again, "It is difficult, without exhausting superlatives, even to unexpressive and wearisome satiety, to do justice to our intense love, reverence, and admiration for the character and teaching of Jesus, . . . the perfection of the spiritual character—as surpassing all men of all times in the closeness and depth of his communion with the Father." I cannot conceive how any honest man, worthy of the name of a follower of him who said, "He that is not against us is on our part," can regard those who hold such opinions of Christ as here expressed in any other light than Christians, and yet probably nine clergymen out of ten would tell us that such love, reverence, and admiration is not enough—"You must believe in Christ's divinity—believe that he died to save you, and that but for his death on the cross you could not be saved. This is the test of your Christianity!" And yet, if comparisons were instituted between the so-called Christian and the lost sinner, no just judge would deny that the latter obeyed and lived up to the teachings and commands of Christ quite as closely and worthily as the former. We have seen what Christ did teach. We know he did not require of us to believe any doctrine whatever ; but to do good, be charitable towards others, and have faith in God.

The reader who has read what I have myself said upon the question of Christ's divinity (*ante* p. 144), will see that

I am necessarily of one accord with all that Mr. Greg says on this subject, and I need not, therefore, repeat those arguments here.

On a par with Mr. Greg's difficulty in understanding how any truth can be revealed to man from without, is his article on the efficacy of prayer, which I cannot pass over without expressing my entire dissent from his conclusions. That prayer was taught by Christ, Mr. Greg, of course, cannot deny. And although he admits that "we feel an internal voice, more potent and persuasive than reason, which assures us that to pray to Him in trouble is an irrepressible instinct of our nature," yet he feels it impossible to admit that reason has aught to say in its favour, because, he says, "if the universe is governed by fixed laws, or (which is the same proposition in different language) if all events are pre-ordained by the foreseeing wisdom of an infinite God, then the prayers of thousands of years and generations of martyrs and saints cannot change or modify one iota of our destiny. The proposition is unassailable," says he, "by the subtlest logic. The weak, fond affections of humanity struggle in vain against the unwelcome conclusion."

Prayer, says Mr. Greg (p. 202), is simply asking the Great Architect of the Universe to work a miracle in our favour—"for what," says he, "is a special providence but an interference with established laws?"

Mr. Greg apparently has himself no faith in the efficacy of prayer. That this want of faith is a great loss to those who feel it, no one can deny. I have already given the Spiritualists' theory of prayer (see *ante* p. 256), and need not here repeat more than to say that, to my mind, this theory, whilst it satisfies our reason, completely meets all the objections Mr. Greg urges. There is, in short, no more miracle or interference with the fixed laws of the universe in man addressing prayers to God and receiving aid through the intercession of His ministering spirits—they being, like

us, only able to work in accordance with God's laws, though perhaps endowed with higher powers than we know of—than there is in such a man beseeching his fellow-men, for the love of God, to aid him by their material help. The immediate acting agency in bringing about the desired result may disclose nothing miraculous or supernatural; but the indirect moving power may be entirely spiritual. Only those who admit or believe it is possible that we can receive mental impressions and impulses from invisible beings—ministering spirits, in fact—can understand how satisfactorily the natural and the so-called supernatural elements in special providences can be reconciled.

Strange to say, Mr. Greg himself admits the possibility of the Spiritualists' theory being true, and that it would meet his own difficulties. "If, therefore," he says, "there be around us, as many think, superior spiritual beings, our prayers, if heard by them, may induce them to aid us by means unknown to our inferior powers. But such aid would then be the natural result of natural though obscure causes."

In dealing with the question of forgiveness of sins, Mr. Greg confesses to a conviction that "*there can be no forgiveness of sins*; . . . that God will not interpose between a cause and its consequences;—'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'" Repentance cannot avert these consequences. It is valid to secure the future, but not to obliterate the past.

I refer to these conclusions of Mr. Greg simply to show that his reasoning entirely confirms the teachings of Spiritualism on the same subject. As there is probably little in connection with Spiritualism and its teachings which Mr. Greg is likely to agree with, this coincidence may be taken as all the more flattering to the Spiritualists.

Touching the doctrine of a Future State, Mr. Greg has again much to say which runs counter to the teachings of the Church, but which I find almost entirely coincides with

the views advanced in the body of the present work, and which were written before I heard of Mr. Greg's book. Those views coincide with the teachings of Spiritualism also; and I suppose, therefore, the Spiritualists may again congratulate themselves upon having in Mr. Greg a co-believer, so far as concerns these minor points of their faith.

Mr. Greg deals admirably with the doctrine "distinctly taught by Scripture, that the lot of each individual is fixed for ever at the judgment-day." Of this he says—"All the attempts yet made to reconcile the doctrine with Divine justice and mercy are calculated to make us blush alike for the human heart that can strive to justify such a creed, and for the human intellect which can delude itself into a belief that it has succeeded in such justification."

Of the division of humanity into the lost and the saved, Mr. Greg says, in words with which I entirely agree, "For as in this world there is every possible gradation of virtue and of vice, which run into each other by the most imperceptible degrees, and are often only distinguishable by the minutest shade; so, in the next world, there must be every possible gradation of reward and punishment." Here, again, Mr. Greg arrives at the same conclusions which the Spiritualist does, and once more the latter may claim an advantage over the Church, in having a creed which is endorsed by the light of reason.

The concluding chapter in Mr. Greg's work, wherein he treats that great subject, the question of a future life—"the Great Enigma," as he calls it—must, it seems to me, leave a sad and melancholy impression upon the reader. Everything which reason can do to tear away the last shred of belief in a future state the writer has there advanced.

"After death," says he, "all that we have ever *known* of a man is gone; all that we have ever *seen* of him is dissolved into its component elements; it does not *disappear*, so as to leave us at liberty to imagine that it may have gone to exist elsewhere, but is actually used up as materials

for other purposes." In a note to this Mr. Greg seems to express doubts whether he is right in saying that all we have ever *known* of a man is gone. In watching a corpse, he admits that we miss something, and that the form before you is not the EGO you have loved. I venture to think that Mr. Greg's intuition has again led him nearer to the truth than his reason would ever be likely to do.

Reason tells Mr. Greg that "the growth, decay, and dissolution we observe, are, to all appearance, those of the mind as well as the body." Is this so? It seems to me that most men know instances enough where no symptom whatever of mental decay is perceptible, notwithstanding the body's decay. Mr. Greg's reason leads him to infer, from the apparent decay of the mind, that it will share the fate of the body at death and exist no longer; but are not the facts quite as consistent with an opposite conclusion? Assuming, as the Spiritualist does, that the body is merely an instrument through which the indwelling spirit, or *ego*, expresses itself—just as a musician expresses himself through the piano—is it not quite intelligible that *when the instrument begins to wear out, the musician should fail to express himself as clearly as before?* Is it necessarily a proof that the player no longer exists, because his instrument has worn itself out, and he can no longer play on it? Again, in all cases of natural death there is bodily decay; but there are many instances where no corresponding mental decay exists. The organism of the brain may remain intact, and the brain may work healthily; but has there ever been a case of natural death at an advanced age where the body was still in its prime? The mind goes on accumulating knowledge to the last. Unless, therefore, the possessor of this knowledge has given the world the benefit of it, in some form, it would be useless; whereas, if such knowledge appertained to the indwelling soul, it could be carried into the next life, and would never be lost.

Mr. Greg next puzzles over the question whether a new-

born babe has a soul, and concludes that its immortality depends upon its surviving the operation of birth. Hence "the awful decision, whether it is to be a mere perishable animal, or a spiritual being, must," thinks Mr. Greg, "depend upon the skill of an accoucher." Here, again, it seems to me, Mr. Greg raises needless doubts. I fail to see what necessity there is for the assumption he makes. I am aware that the Church is silent on the subject; and it is impossible to discuss the question from the orthodox point of view. Perhaps, therefore, it may not be trespassing too much on the reader's indulgence again to give the Spiritualists' theory. The teachings of Spiritualism go to show that the reception by the body of its immortal principle depends upon the body having reached a certain stage of ante-natal growth; and its destruction, even before birth, does not affect its immortality. Such infants have a spiritual body, which continues to grow after the death of the natural body. These are theories of Spiritualism, based upon alleged communications from the other world. I do not advance them here as authoritative, but merely in reply to the speculations of Mr. Greg, which certainly rest upon no sounder basis, and are therefore deserving of no preference over these.

Mr. Greg makes an assumption which lands him in a difficulty; and, because he cannot see his way out of it, he sees no escape from "hopeless acquiescence in a gloomy conclusion, or equally hopeless struggle, to escape from it." He waxes wroth over the argument, that the soul must be immortal because it is *immaterial*. "How can human beings," says he, "professing to have cultivated their understandings, be content to repeat, and rest in, such wretched inanities as these?" So far, certainly, I agree with Mr. Greg, that the mere fact of the soul being *immaterial* is no proof to us of its being *immortal*. Nor is the fact of the soul's surviving the change we call *death* any proof that it will survive all other changes: but it certainly is a very

strong ground for inferring that it will. As a matter of fact, it does not much concern us to know more than the fact, that the soul survives the death of the body. Those who cannot rest content with the New Testament revelation on this point, may perhaps find evidence of the fact in modern Spiritualism. Where else they are likely to find any evidence of it, it is difficult to conceive. Certainly, to judge from the work before us, reason seems to afford very little hope.

Many persons argue that a future state may be inferred from the necessity there would seem to be for a rectification of the injustice and cruelty we find in the circumstances of this life. Even this hope Mr. Greg demolishes with his reason. He considers there may be more compensations to others than we are aware of, and there may be plenty of secret retribution in this life, which we know nothing of, for those who have sinned, without assuming the necessity of any future state of rewards and punishments. It would certainly, I think, be a good thing if it were so; for, with every allowance for instances of suffering—hidden from the world—which those experience who have sinned against some moral and physical law, it cannot be denied that such is not the case in all instances. If, in ever so few cases, real and unavoidable cruelty and hardship were the lot of any of God's creatures here below, and there were no future life of compensation, it seems to me it would be the greatest conceivable indictment against the mercy and justice of the Almighty. The possession of wealth—to supply every want, and secure the kindness and attention and applause of our fellow-creatures—is so great an alleviation of any private trials which the rich endure, that, making every allowance for cases of unhappiness, a very large proportion of selfish, and therefore unchristian men, pass through life without comparatively any inconvenience—indeed, with no small amount of happiness. The capacity for enjoyment of the present, and the absence of all fault-finding or

reproach in those about them, must inevitably dull the consciences of such men. In a spiritual world, where men are valued by their spiritual development—the inner man, in fact—it is clear, that all which renders the rich and selfish man the object of interest and attention to his companions, will vanish; and if he stands revealed to the world in all his spiritual depravity, unloved and uncared for, his retribution will come upon him much more forcibly than ever it could on earth. Here, men are, and always will be, more or less courted and flattered by reason of their *material* possessions. There, those who have cultivated *spiritual* possessions—the qualities of mind and heart which Christ insisted on—will be the rich, and will be prized and loved accordingly.

Assuming that these theories be facts—and in that case, I suppose, Mr. Greg must admit they must have been *revealed* to us, since we could never have discovered them—it is impossible to conceal from ourselves the immense importance they have on our every-day experience, and how completely the knowledge of these facts would modify our ambitions and pursuits in life.

Mr. Greg finds in this life abundant scope for the exercise of all our faculties, love, hope, fancy, &c. Humanity and “the mighty possibilities of human destiny” are the lofty themes on which Mr. Greg contends we can find abundant scope for the exercise of our highest faculties. Doubtless with many this is so. Some have their harvest of love, of hope, and of fancy here, it is true; but, alas, how few are they compared with the thousands and tens of thousands of broken hearts and wasted lives, crushed hopelessly and cruelly by circumstances over which we have no control. To tell a poor broken-hearted girl, whose dream of love and happiness has been blasted by the deception of a base scoundrel, that this life affords abundant scope for the exercise of her faculties, seems to me very like mockery. It is all very well to say such persons are responsible for

their own acts and must take the consequences. True; but where there are villains there are also victims; the latter, too often, are entirely blameless, and yet are crushed and destroyed to gratify the selfishness of others who, rich and respected to the last, go on through life in comparative ignorance of suffering. Neither do I see the satisfaction which Mr. Greg thinks men ought to feel in working for the future good of humanity, and enjoying the satisfaction of having our names handed down to posterity. If we are to be annihilated at death, *we* shall certainly never feel this glorious satisfaction. All that would concern us would be with *the present*, as Mr. Greg himself says in one part of his work, where he tells us man is "sent into this world, not to be constantly hankering after, dreaming of, preparing for, another which may or may not be in store for him." Assuming, however, with the Spiritualist, that all men in this world and the next are one united brotherhood, there would undeniably be immense satisfaction in regarding, *from the life to come*, the good results of our life and actions on earth.

Mr. Greg protests against the doctrine that we are to lead ascetic lives, "to put down the nature which God has given us, to struggle after one which He has not bestowed,"—and yet he asks us to bear, with philosophical indifference, the destruction of our dearest hopes, the loss of our most loved friends and relations, and console ourselves with dreams of the mighty possibilities of the human race as a whole, or the reflection "that we are unreluctant and self-sacrificing co-operators with the Creator of the universe, and in the noble consciousness of being worthy and capable of so sublime a conception, yet so sad a destiny." Verily, the most austere life ever taught by the most misguided of ascetics—if it but have a heaven at the end of it—seems to me infinitely more attractive than the gloomy purpose in life which Mr. Greg finds consolation in. Orthodox religion may induce in us a gloomy frame of mind;

but it, at least, affords a bright ray of comfort in the thought of what is to come. Mr. Greg gives us quite as gloomy a life here, without any hope or thought of a brighter one to follow it.

To conclude, Mr. Greg has applied his reason to every doctrine which the Christian holds dear, and finds that they, one and all, succumb to critical analysis. Whilst fully agreeing with him that many, if not most of the doctrines of modern Christianity are erroneous and unsound, I cannot allow that he has succeeded in destroying the foundations of religion altogether, though such must be the effect of his work upon the minds of many of his readers. He declines to believe in the infallibility of the Scriptures or the doctrines based thereon. So far I can agree with him; but when he seeks to prove that our reason tells us there *can* be no revelation to man of knowledge from without; that Christ was mistaken respecting demoniacal possession; that his miracles could never have happened because science says they would be supernatural, and science says the supernatural is impossible; that Christ *could not* have re-appeared to his disciples in his material form; that speaking with tongues must needs have been all delusion; that prayer implies a supernatural interference with fixed laws, and is therefore incapable of eliciting any response; and, finally, that the probabilities are all against the reality of a future life;—on all these points I differ *in toto* with Mr. Greg. Strange to say, every one of these points involves or hinges on the possibility of communion between human beings in the spiritual world and in this. These seem everywhere to be Mr. Greg's stumbling-blocks, and in so far as his opinions represent those of the thinking men of the day, it illustrates the immense value of a new revelation touching the possibility of living hereafter. However much the reader may be disposed to ridicule the theories I have alluded to, it cannot be denied that their importance to mankind is so great that every consideration should be

given by our *savans* to the alleged phenomena on which they rest, if there be the slightest chance of their proving to have any foundation in fact.

Finally, after telling us that reason declares a future life to be a delusion, he makes the remarkable admission, that it is a question about which we must "apply to the spiritual sense for information. We believe," says he, "there is no other solution of the question. To the man who disbelieves the soul's existence, this will, of course, appear an unwarrantable and illogical admission. To him the soul has not spoken. My sources of information are unavailable to him. *My soul can tell him nothing. Providence has denied to him a sense which has been granted to me;* and all the knowledge which comes to me through the avenues of that sense must seem foolish to him."

The above seems hardly consistent with what Mr. Greg has said on the impossibility of the human mind receiving a revelation from without. However this may be, it seems Mr. Greg admits that he has an intuitive conviction of a future existence, but that possibly another man may not be so blessed. What the state of mind of such a man must be, after reading a work which will undermine any remnants of his former faith, I can hardly conceive, but it seems unlikely to be an enviable one. In this view of the matter, it seems a pity that Mr. Greg should have set himself the task of undermining the faith of others who, he himself admits, *may not* have the intuitive conviction to fall back upon, which he himself confesses to. Especially is this so, when he writes of the value of the doctrine of a Future Life in such eulogistic terms as the following: "Of its inestimable value as a consolation to the sorrowing, as a hope to the aspiring, as a rest to the weary and heavy laden, it is not easy to speak in language strong enough for the occasion."

My task is now ended. I fear that I owe the reader an apology for this long criticism upon Mr. Greg's work.

Feeling and knowing that much that he advances is erroneous, and calculated to unsettle the minds of those who imbibe his logic, but do not possess his intuitive convictions, I have ventured to advance what little I am able to do, in opposition to those conclusions—with what result the reader must judge.



APPENDIX.

LIST OF WORKS obtainable of W. H. Harrison, 38 Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, W.C.; or Mr. J. Burns, 15 Southampton Row, Bloomsbury, W.C., London.

The Facts of Spiritualism.

Where are the Dead? or, Spiritualism Explained. This is a useful first-book for inquirers, containing well authenticated and selected reports of all the different phases of modern spirit phenomena, from table-turning to the visible materialisation of the faces and forms of the departed, and the photographing of spirits; proving by undeniable facts that those we mourn as *dead are still alive*, and can communicate with us; and that Spiritualism is sanctioned by Scripture, and consistent with science and common sense; with specimens of intensely interesting communications received touching death, the future life, and the experiences of the departed. Also extracts from the literature of Spiritualism, advice to investigators, list of books, addresses of mediums, and all useful information. By Fritz. London: Simpkins, Marshall, & Co. Third edition. Price 3s.

Spirit People. A scientifically accurate description of Manifestations recently produced by Spirits, and simultaneously witnessed by the Author and other Observers in London. By William H. Harrison. 1s.

The Debateable Land, by the Hon. Robert Dale Owen, formerly American Minister at the Court of Naples. A standard work containing interesting and well-authenticated facts, proving the reality of spirit communion. It also contains an elaborate essay defining the author's views of the relationship of Spiritualism to the Christian Church. 7s. 6d.

Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World, by Robert Dale Owen. An excellent book of absorbing interest, replete with well-authenticated narratives, describing manifestations produced by Spirits. 7s. 6d.

Report on Spiritualism, by the Committee of the Dialectical Society. This Committee consisted of literary, scientific, and other professional men who investigated Spiritualism for two years without engaging the services of any professional medium, after which they published the Report. Original edition, 15s.; moderately abridged edition, 5s.

Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism, by William Crookes, F.R.S.
The best work ever published to scientifically demonstrate the reality of some of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. 5s.

Miracles and Modern Spiritualism, by Alfred Russell Wallace, F.R.G.S. This book contains a masterly argument in reply to Hume's "Essay on Miracles." It also records a large number of interesting Spiritual manifestations, and contains some of the personal experiences of Mr. Wallace. 5s.

Planchette; or, The Despair of Science, by Epes Sargent. A book rich in descriptions of well-authenticated spiritual phenomena. Information about the relationship of Spiritualism to Religion and Science is also given. 5s.

Concerning Spiritualism, by Gerald Massey. A brilliant, well written, little essay on Spiritualism. Neatly bound, with gilt edges. 2s.

The Teachings of Spiritualism.

Life Beyond the Grave, described by a Spirit through a Writing Medium. Price 3s. This is an intensely interesting explanation of the immediate experiences after death of those persons (including the majority of mankind) who are not spiritually advanced enough to be qualified for the higher spirit spheres. It explains in a practical and intelligent manner many abstruse and mysterious questions touching the relationship between man and his spirit. Amongst other topics, it explains the process of death; the condition of the spirit during sleep; the influence and origin of good and evil thoughts; first experiences after death of good men, of bad men, drunkards, &c.; the true day of judgment; forgiveness of sins; how prayer is answered; happiness, and how to attain it; the physical aspects of the spirit world; spirit possession; the occupations of bad spirits; the spiritual value of scientific, theological, or political pursuits; the sufferings of the unhappily married in the next life; how to secure marital happiness; the doctrine of marital affinities; marriages in heaven; the future of married people; the power of will; chance, luck, and destiny; inspiration and genius explained. The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* says of this book: "It is altogether a more creditably written book, and more likely to stimulate research on the subject, than many that have appeared." "There are many portions of the book that would interest anyone, whether a believer or an unbeliever."

Discourses through the Mediumship of Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan. The New Science; Spiritual Ethics. Price 7s. These lectures are exceedingly beautiful and interesting. They were delivered by spirits through the mediumship of a trance medium in 1874-5.

Identity of Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism, by Eugene Crowell, M.D. 10s.

Arcana of Nature. Two Vols. By Hudson Tuttle. 6s. per Vol.

Arcana of Spiritualism, by Hudson Tuttle. 5s.

Career of Religious Ideas, by Hudson Tuttle. 2s. 6d.

Poems of the Inner Life. Given by Spirits through the mediumship of Lizzie Doten. The accusation is sometimes made by disbelievers that spirit messages are of a trumpety character, but these beautiful poems give evidence that all spirit utterances are not so. "The Prophecy of Vala," published in this book, and professedly given by the Spirit of Edgar Allen Poe, is better than any which that poet wrote during the whole of his life on earth. 7s. 6d.

Letters on Spiritualism, by the late J. W. Edmonds, Judge of the Supreme Court, New York, U.S. This book consists of essays on the Social, Moral, and Scientific aspects of Spiritualism. 3s. 6d.

Poems of Progress. Given by spirits through the mediumship of Lizzie Doten. This, like the preceding work, is a collection of beautiful poems. 7s. 6d.

Real Life in Spirit-Land. Being Life-Experiences, Scenes, Incidents, and Conditions illustrative of Spirit-Life and the principles of the Spiritual Philosophy. Of practical value to any who are anxious to study the theories of Spiritualists and Mediums, for the purpose of deducing a consistent system of faith concerning the future, its rewards and punishments, &c., as it establishes a basis in reason for its propositions, and asks no blind acceptance of statements, but enjoins the strictest analysis of them. Given inspirationally through Mrs. Maria M. King. 5s. 6d.

Voices from the Spirit World, being communications from many Spirits by the hand of Isaac Post. 5s. 6d.

The Gaderene; or, Spirits in Prison, by J. O. Barrett and J. M. Peebles.

WORKS BY ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS,

The "Poughkeepsie Seer."

	s.	d.
Nature's Divine Revelations,	15	0
The Physician. Vol. I. Great Harmonia,	7	6
The Teacher. ,, II. ,,	7	6
The Seer. ,, III. ,,	7	6
The Reformer. ,, IV. ,,	7	6
The Thinker. ,, V. ,,	7	6
Magic Staff. An Autobiography of A. J. Davis,	7	6
A Stellar Key to the Summer Land,	3	6
Arabula, or Divine Guest,	7	6
Approaching Crisis; or, Truth v. Theology,	5	0
Answers to Ever-recurring Questions from the People,	7	6

						<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Children's Progressive Lyceum Manual,	..	..	..	..	..	2	0
Death and the After-Life,	..	..	..	..	..	3	6
History and Philosophy of Evil,	..	..	..	..	..	3	6
Harbinger of Health,	..	..	..	..	..	7	6
Harmonial Man; or, Thoughts for the Age,	..	..	..	..	..	3	6
Events in the Life of a Seer. (Memoranda),	..	..	..	..	..	7	6
Philosophy of Special Providence,	..	..	..	..	..	2	6
Free Thoughts Concerning Religion,	..	..	..	..	..	3	6
Penetralia; Containing Harmonial Answers,	..	..	..	..	..	7	6
Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse,	..	..	..	..	..	6	0
The Inner Life; or, Spirit Mysteries Explained,	..	..	..	..	..	7	6
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